Draft Preview '84 . . .

Exclusive Buchsba[redacted]

PITTSBURGH Steelers WEEKLY $1.50

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May 1984

Mel Blount Moves To Off-Field Challenges

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Terry Bradshaw is optimistic over comeback shot. Story on page 3.

Dick Haley Doesn't Undervalue '84 Talent

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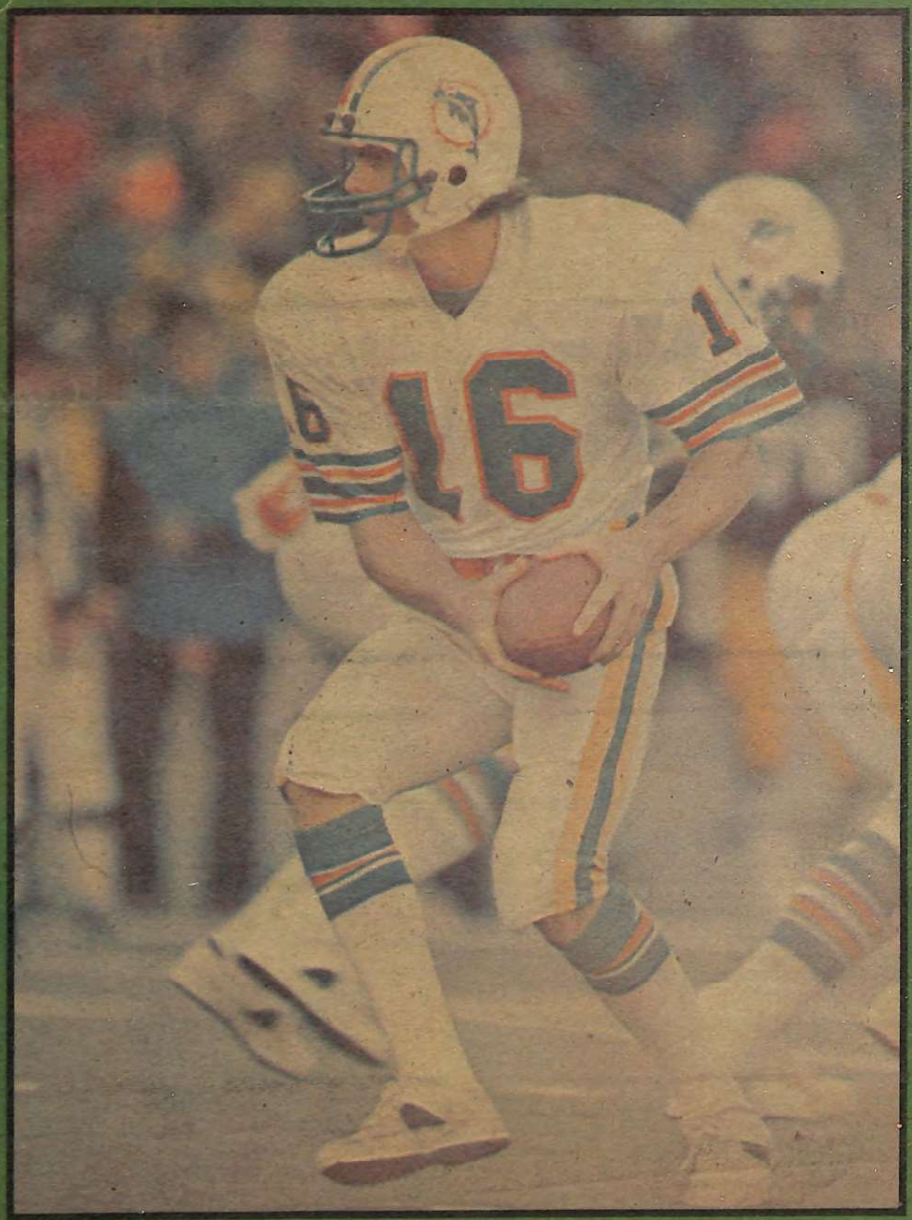

Newest Steeler: David Woodley

Tragedy, so it seems, comes in all shapes and sizes.

When I was earning my weekly bread (Despite the obvious ironies, the Pittsburgh Parochial School System in those days didn't pay anyone enough money to afford *daily* bread. They probably still don't.) as a junior-high teacher, one of the highlights of eighth-grade English each year was the two-week hiatus that we took from conjugating verbs and diagramming sentences so that the students could read and compare "Oedipus Rex" and "Death of a Salesman."

And, unless those kids had lost a grandparent, come from a split home or woke up one morning to find their goldfish floating belly-up in the fishtank, that was one of the first looks any of them had had of real tragedy. For three years -- every year -- the new eighth-grade class would file in anxiously, and the first question was always centered around when we'd start reading those works.

Word spreads quickly anytime the teacher is perceived to be cutting the class a break.

I had experienced, I thought, all the tragedy I ever wanted to encounter when my maternal grandmother, who used to daily hoist me into her lumpy lap to read me my favorite book of those days, "The Legend of Davey Crockett," finally succumbed to her own battle of the Alamo, the heinous cancer that had literally eaten away her insides.

I have been, I admit, luckier than most. Although I never got the chance to share the wisdom of either of my grandfathers, and my grandmothers had both passed on before I reached adolescence, my parents and in-laws are still living, and even the 450-mile abyss that separates us -- they all still live in Pittsburgh -- can't erase the very real bond that exists.

But, for the Pittsburgh Steelers, in a very legitimate and tangible way, tragedy has reared its ugly countenance far too many times. There's little need here to recall the tragedy of, say, Randy Reutershan, the former Pitt Panther waterbug who'd have been one of the league's all-time great special teams performers, had he not run his car off a rain-soaked South Hills road and suffered enough brain damage for the medicos to advise him against ever again donning a football helmet.

Nor is there any need to summon up memories of Laverne Smith, an outside threat the likes of which the Steelers haven't seen since Smith went down under a huge pile in Baltimore in 1977, his leg so grotesquely angled that grown men turned away rather than watch Smith writhe in the mud of Baltimore's Municipal Stadium.

The list goes on and on.

And now, just in the past year, the litany has grown to include Gabe Rivera. And, more recently, John Meyer.

For the Pittsburgh Steelers, you see, tragedy only comes in one size. Extra large.

There are, to be sure, significant similarities between Rivera and Meyer. There are also very definable differences.

Rivera, of course, has been much-publicized since his accident of last October. Today, the man dubbed Senor Sack, and an almost-instantly popular member of the Steelers, is within a week of being ready to leave the Harmarville Rehabilitation Center, where, for months, he's been participating in the center's four-phased spinal cord rehab program.

My memories of Rivera, admittedly, are not voluminous. The day he was drafted, I was packing my bags for Chicago and preparing to leave behind a wife, daughter and a new house I'd only occupied for six months.

I finally caught up to Rivera in July in St. Vincent's. And, truthfully, the thing I remember the most -- besides the fact that my hand was all but lost inside his huge paw -- was that, for a man reportedly so fun-loving, Rivera looked very shy.

My last encounter with Gabe didn't take place until last week, when, through the public relations department at Harmarville, I was able to arrange a telephone interview with him.

Truth of the matter is, when I'd phoned Harmarville to get an update on Gabe, I really had no intention of interviewing him. My plans were to run two wire service stories, but, since they were at least a month old, I wanted to get an update on Rivera's condition.

And, since confession has been a large part of this column, I'm also forced to admit that, as the appointed hour neared for my call to Gabe, I grew more apprehensive than I've ever been for an interview.

Gabe Rivera

There is -- and I think we all feel it -- something bone-chilling about the spectre of a man once so vital, now rendered something less than that, that is, to put it in its simplest terms, scary. I groped to put together some cogent questions for Gabe.

I soon found out that Gabe Rivera is as vital a human being as you or I. And, as my waistline continues to expand, I might venture a guess that he's probably more motivated than I am right now.

Gabe, it seems, is a man at peace with his plight.

"It was a hard thing for me to accept at first, I suppose," he says in his slow, heavy half-drawl, "but I wasn't about to just let myself lay here. I had to do something."

Under the guidance of Dr. Gilbert Brenes, Rivera has, in fact, done much.

His right arm, injured in the accident and so very vital to his recovery, is now back to 70 percent of its

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'I Love This Game Too Much'

Bradshaw Determined To Return

BY O.K. DAVIS

RUSTON, La. -- Forget about any retirement notices for Terry Bradshaw.

At least for the moment.

Although his heralded right arm is still in a mending process, the famed Pittsburgh Steeler quarterback plans to be throwing National Football League balls again this fall.

For over a year now, the 13-year veteran and leader of four Super Bowl titles has painstakingly endured the frustrations of recovering from an injured right arm and bruised elbow.

He played in only one game for the Men of Steel in 1983, but it was memorable: five completions in eight attempts for 77 yards and a pair of touchdowns in a 34-7 late-season rout of the New York Jets that clinched, for the Steelers, their second-consecutive playoff berth.

But, for the most part, Bradshaw has been getting his name in the newspapers and assorted other publications for his slow and constantly trying recovery from the arm-elbow troubles.

"You wanna talk about the injury, huh?" laughed Bradshaw late last week to a reporter who requested an interview. "No, I am not retiring. No, I don't plan to throw much until early summer. No, they're not making a movie about the arm. At least not right now, anyway."

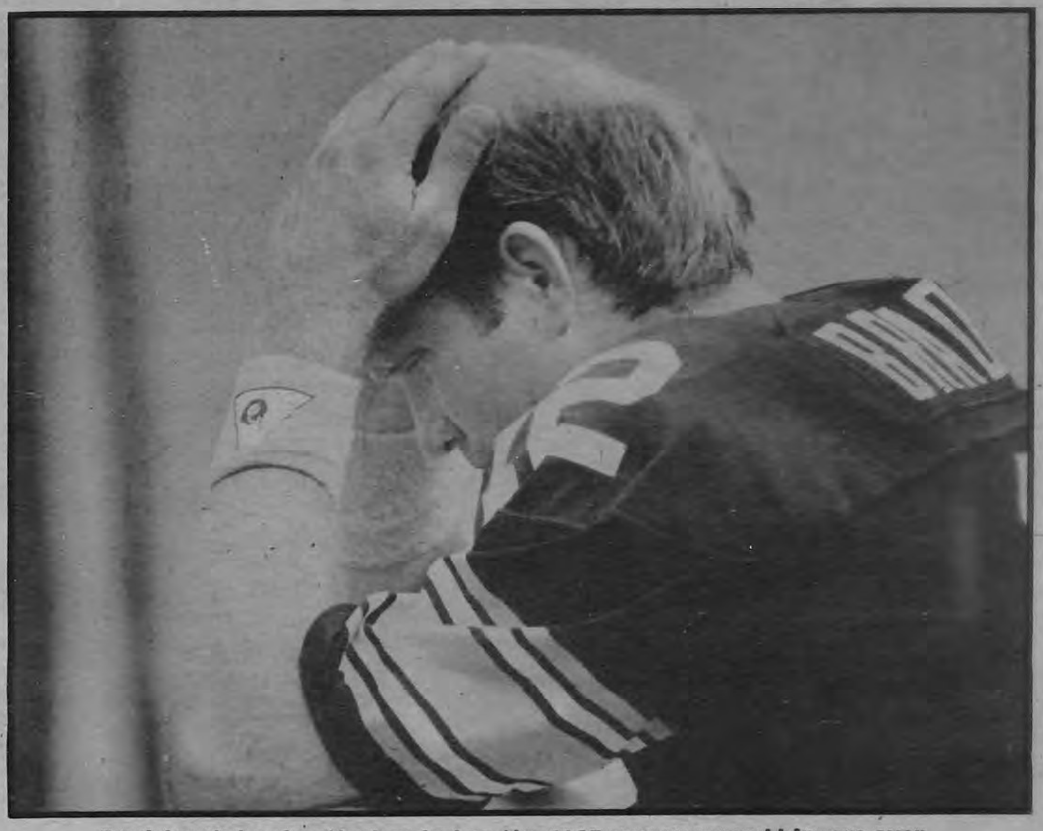
More laughter.

"There, that answers most of the questions, doesn't it?" continued Bradshaw to the listener at the other end of the telephone. "Gosh darn, I'll sure be glad when everything is just right and I can get back to answering questions about football."

Through it all, the process of acuscopic surveys and never-ending questions from the critics, Terry Bradshaw has remained cordial and accommodating.

"I wish I could say right now that you'll be seeing the old Terry Bradshaw in the future, but who can really say?" he said. "All I know is that I'm very optimistic and very confident in what the doctors have told me and, most of all, I believe in myself enough to the point where I'll make good things happen. Sometimes when a man is down is when he relizes that he has to pick himself up and go on.

"I grew up learning to work hard and dedicating myself to become the very best I could be, whether it was going to be as a football player or as a lawyer. Whatever I would've done, I was determined to be the very best. I love being a football player. And, because I love it, I am going to do my darndest to play as long as I can. This injury that I've had has made me rededicate myself and work even harder, because anything good that happens isn't going to come easy. You've got to make things happen."



Bradshaw's hoping the headaches the 1983 season caused him are over.

The day-to-day or week-by-week report that comes out of either Louisiana or Pennsylvania on Bradshaw's golden "wing" is that his progress continues to be encouraging, that his inner psyche belies that he's suffered through so much pain, and that his timetable remains "to play until I'm at least 40."

"Isn't that what I told you last summer?" Bradshaw reminded the reporter. "Why stop now? I love this game too much. It's too much fun to quit now. Shucks with the injury. Can't let something like that stop me, can I?"

Those words were spoken on a half-serious note, Brad realizing that reality must also be confronted with as much determination as staring into the facemask of an onrushing lineman.

"I'm doing as little with the arm as possible, because the doctors told me to take care of it, put as little stress on it as possible," he said. "The physicians down here in Louisiana say I'll be all right if I keep it absolutely still. About all I'm doing with it is playing cards with it. And, in that regard, the old arm is brand new. Haven't lost a hand yet."

Dr. Billy Bundrick, who graduated from Bradshaw's alma mater, Louisiana Tech University, is the orthopedic surgeon from Shreveport who's been like a "second father," in Terry's words, to Bradshaw during his long months of mending.

Among the most respected individuals in the business, Bundrick is of the belief that Bradshaw "will be able to throw again and will be able to play again.

"But the big key is laying off of it (the arm, elbow) and letting it rest and recover properly. He comes by our office regularly, and we check it out, make sure everything is fine. We checked him after the season was over, shortly after the game against the Jets, and we found that there was no trouble at all at the site of the original surgery (performed

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Bundrick Optimistic

Terry Bradshaw's improvement is just a matter of time and patience, according to Dr. William Bundrick, Bradshaw's surgeon.

"He is showing steady improvement," said Bundrick last week from his Shreveport offices. "The big thing now is for him not to try to do too much at once.

"Right now, we've got him working on the weights, the same way he has been for some time, but we've been able to increase the amount, because Terry's getting through it with no pain."

Bradshaw, whose rehabilitation included lifting five-pound weights, has since doubled that amount. The pain, Bundrick reiterates, has subsided, which, of course, lends to the optimism surrounding Bradshaw's comeback.

But, Bundrick warns, nothing will be definitive until Terry begins throwing on a regular basis; and even then, the final verdict might not be in until he's been subjected to throwing under game conditions.

The initial throwing won't come until some time in early summer, although recently Terry did lob a few experimental passes of the wounded duck variety, just to assure everyone involved that the healing process was on schedule.

"There's nothing in Terry's rehabilitation thus far that leads us to believe that he'll not be ready to come back," Bundrick said. "As far

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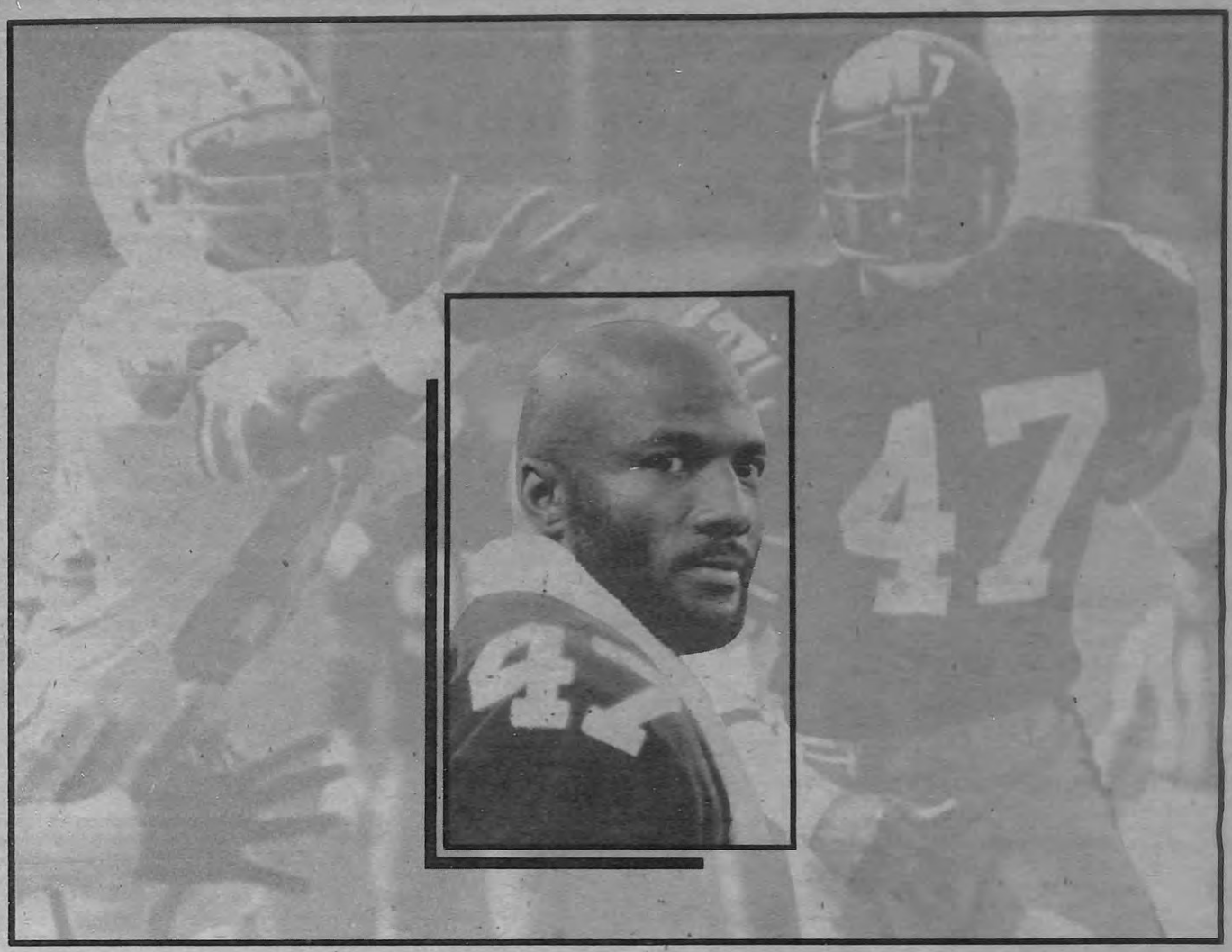

Goin' In Style

One-Of-A-Kind Blount Calls It A Career

BY TIM SASSONE

Mel Blount says he doesn't know how important it is to be remembered as one of the greatest Steelers of all time, the most durable performer in the history of the franchise and one of the dozen or so Pittsburgh players from the last decade who just might wind up in the Hall of Fame.

"I think it's important for people to remember you as a person," says Blount, who retired March 15 after 14 seasons in the Steeler defensive backfield.

If that's the case, Blount should stand head and shoulders above everyone else in the hearts and minds of Steeler fans. On the field and off, as a person and a player, Mel Blount was something special.

"When I talked to Mel, he didn't lean either way (toward retirement or staying), but he was concerned about whether we thought we had the young players to replace him," said new Steeler defensive coordinator Tony Dungy. "I told him we had a lot of confidence in both Harvey Clayton and Sam Washington and that either of them, or maybe a combination of them, could handle the position.

"But that's just like Mel to be worried about what kind of shape he's leaving the team in, rather than what he wants to do with his life," said Dungy. "He's just that type of person, something special."

Perhaps it will take his retirement for Blount to finally receive the kind of recognition he deserves and has deserved since coming out of Southern University in Louisiana as the Steelers' third-round draft pick in 1970 (the same draft that produced Terry Bradshaw), for being the gentleman he is, for his dedication to his profession and, most importantly, for his committment to helping others through his involvement in various charities such as the Red Cross and United Way and for his youth home for troubled boys in Georgia.

If Mel Blount was All-Pro on the field, he's All-Human Being off it.

* * *

When Mel Blount finally did decide to hang up jersey No. 47 for good, he did so not because his 35-year-old body could no longer take the rigors of professional football. On the contrary, maybe no other Steeler took better care of himself than Blount, whose body looked in 1983 much the same as it did in 1970.

Blount retired because he felt it was time to get on with the other things in his life, such as overseeing his youth home, running the family farm in Georgia, breeding quarter-horses and doing public relations work for several different companies.

"I'm busier now than I was when I was playing," Blount says with a chuckle.

Because of his numerous interests away from football, Blount said the decision to leave the game that's been part of his life for 22 years wasn't so difficult. Several years ago, the Georgia native was quoted as saying he was looking forward to retirement, and that's still true today. But unlike many professional athletes who find themselves with nowhere to go when their playing days end, Blount has prepared well for this day. Now he's ready to reap the rewards.

"I think it would have been a difficult decision if I wasn't involved in other things and really didn't know what I wanted to do with the rest of my life," Blount said. "I think my big decision was whether or not I was willing to give up the game to go and do something like I'm doing that I feel would be beneficial not only to myself but to young America. That's the way I looked at it, and I didn't find it hard at all.

"I'm into the retirement," Blount said. "I'm really excited about it because it's a new challenge. It's a lot more difficult challenge than playing defensive back. I think the whole retirement thing is a state of mind. I was just at that point in my career

where I was developing other interests, and I think the worst thing that can happen is to be out on the football field trying to play football when your mind is somewhere else. I just felt it was only fair to myself, my teammates and the organization that I step aside and let them develop someone else who can give them more years at the position."

To find Mel Blount from now on, you'll have to look him up at his Vidalia, Georgia farm, which he hopes to turn into the kind of productive operation he's always dreamed of and which also serves as the base for the Mel Blount Youth Home, Inc.

Although still in its beginning stages, Blount's program is for boys ranging in age from 12 to 17 years who have been sent to the 2,700-acre farm as an alternative to jail. There, they help with the farm work and attend a nearby school. In addition, they're exposed to a one-of-a-kind role model in Blount.

"I always wanted to take and give something back to society, and I always wanted a lot of boys around me on the farm," said Blount. "The idea stayed in the back of my mind and then, one day, and this is, I guess, how the Lord leads you in the direction he wants you to go, I was out doing some autograph sessions in Pittsburgh, and I saw the way the kids responded to the kind of influence we as football players had on them. I said, well, there's got to be some kind of way I could do more than just sign autographs for kids, something that was going to mean more to them in the long run, and that's really how everything came about.

"Just like everything else, we're just getting it off the ground, and I guess the measure of success in this kind of business is what the boys do once they leave your program," Blount said.

"Kids look up to football players, and I feel I owe them something in return," he said. "We're not talking about hardened criminals. We're talking about kids we can help. You can't help everybody, but, if you save one kid, you're making a contribution to society."

From his shaved head, to his All-Pro play, to his off-the-field activities, Mel Blount has always stood out in a crowd. It's all too rare that an athlete understands his position in the community and feels compelled to put it to good use.

"I've always tried to make myself available," he says. "I think too many times athletes kind of hide themselves away from the public, or they don't want to get involved with the public, or they think they're such stars that they don't have the time. I don't have that problem because I enjoy people. You've got to remember the real reason we're where we are is because of the public."

* * *

When Mel Blount hit you, you knew it. "He makes you pay for every catch," Cleveland TE Ozzie Newsome once said. In the Steelers' most dominant years, their trademark was a defense that brought opponents to their knees with its hard-hitting play and aggressiveness, and Blount was a big part of it. If a runner was fortunate to get past either Joe Greene or L.C. Greenwood on the line and through linebackers like Jack Lambert and Jack Ham, the reward was having to answer to No. 47.

Perhaps because of the way Blount went about making receivers earn their receptions and runners pay for their gains, there was a time in the mid-1970's when he was tagged as a cheap-shot artist, a dirty player. Maybe because Blount played at a time when defensive backs like Oakland's Jack Tatum and George Atkinson made a reputation for themselves by playing with questionable ethics, he, too, was grouped into the same category, guilty through association, you could say.

Blount got national attention in 1977 when he sued coach Chuck Noll for $5 million after the coach indirectly included his player as part of a "criminal element" in the NFL during testimony in Atkinson's slander suit against the Steelers. Blount later dropped the suit, which, he said, never threatened his close relationship with Noll.

"I don't think there was anybody on that Steeler team or in that organization that has more respect for Chuck than me or loves him any more than I do," Blount said. "I think Chuck is smart enough, and he knew, even during the time of the lawsuit, what it was all about. He showed what kind of man he was because he knew that it was just a bunch of publicity and a media affair. Everybody broke the story the wrong way because the lawsuit wasn't even filed against him, it was filed against the Pittsburgh Steelers. Everyone was saying Chuck Noll because the media wanted to focus on that one person, and they blew it all out of proportion. I don't think our relationship has suffered any. I think, if anything, it grew stronger."

Blount admits that it was a difficult time in his career, but that he had the inner strength to get through it.

"A lot of times your image can be misconstrued. People project you in one image when, really, you're a totally different person," Blount said. "People say you really look mean down on the field, but it's really not that, it's just the intensity level which you play on that gave them that impression.

"A lot of times an athlete can go through a city or through an organization and people never really get to know him. I'm quite sure I'm a victim of that because I think a lot of people have really misunderstood me and didn't get to know me as a person," Blount said.

"I've always been the kind of person who didn't let outside things bother me, though," he added, "because I knew who I was. I think that's really been a strong trait of mine throughout my career because I've had a lot of negative publicity and a lot of negative things happen. But I was able to walk tall anyway because I knew who I was inside, I knew what my goals were and what I was trying to get accomplished."

* * *

As a player, Mel Blount had few, if any, equals. During the Steeler dynasty years, there wasn't a better cornerback, period. There may never have been a better one than Blount.

"Mel was one of the best ever to play the corner," said Dungy, "and I think when the people from Canton get around to looking at his credentials, they'll agree."

While Blount prefers not to dwell on his individual accomplishments, they're hard to ignore.

- Blount's participation in 200 regular-season games is a Steeler record. He played in every game in 13 of his 14 seasons and closed his career with a club record 132-game consecutive starting streak. Blount missed just one regular-season game in his career (at Denver in 1977) and is one of only three players in Pittsburgh history to play 14 seasons, Bradshaw and Ernie Stautner being the others.
- Blount leaves as the Steelers' all-time interception leader with 57, which places him tied for seventh place on the NFL career interception list with Bobby Boyd and Johnny Robinson. Blount also holds the Steeler single-season interception record with 11 in 1975 and the club mark for most consecutive games intercepting a pass, six in 1975.
- Blount also picked off four passes in post-season play, including possibly the biggest of his career at

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Clayton Hears Opportunity Knocking

Harvey Clayton can hardly wait for training camp. That's because Clayton will be starting his second season as a Steeler, facing what he considers a "once in a lifetime opportunity."

With the retirement of Mel Blount, Clayton has to be considered the front-runner to replace Blount as the team's starting right cornerback.

"It'll be an exciting challenge, and I'm looking forward to it," said Clayton, who figures to battle it out with three-year veteran Sam Washington for Blount's job. "I've been looking forward to this for 20 years. I always said I wanted to be a starter in the NFL, and now I have the chance."

Clayton earned himself a spot on the Steeler roster last year the hard way -- as a free agent out of Florida State. At 5-foot-9, 170 pounds, he surprised many people with his ferocious style of play and big-hitting ability. He was used mostly as the nickel back in passing situations, finishing his rookie season with 18 tackles, two sacks and an interception, which he returned 70 yards for the game-clinching touchdown in a Monday night game against Cincinnati.

"I may have surprised others, but I didn't surprise myself," said Clayton, who was drafted by only the USFL's Tampa Bay Bandits out of college. "I didn't get the publicity (in college) others did, but the only thing they had over me was size and a name. And I said I wasn't going to let that stand in my way."

Ironically, if Clayton should step in for Blount, he'll be replacing someone who had been called the prototype cornerback -- 6-foot-3, 205 pounds and with a reputation for being one of the hardest hitters to ever play the position, that was Blount. Clayton, however, doesn't see his size -- or lack of size -- as a problem.

"They'll be in for a surprise if they try to run over me," he warns. "I do have to concentrate better and be more physical. You have to prepare yourself like a boxer; work hard in practice and let it carry over into games."

Clayton says he'll always consider himself fortunate to have had the opportunity to play with a guy like Mel Blount, even if it was only for one season.

"Mel Blount is a helluva guy," Clayton said. "Nobody, and I mean nobody, can replace him. He will live on.

"Mel taught me a lot," added Clayton. "Last year was a learning year for me, and Mel was responsible for a lot of that. I was in his class, you might say, and he was the teacher. Rarely do you see a veteran who's willing to help a young player and compete against him at the same time, but Mel is a rare individual."

Clayton said if he could inherit one of Blount's characteristics it would be the All-Pro's smartness and savvy.

"He was one of the smartest to ever play in the NFL," said Clayton. "You have to be smart to play for 14 years."

One thing is certain: whoever it is that replaces Mel Blount in the Steeler defensive picture will be thrust into a pressure situation. Clayton is aware of that, but says he was under a similar type of pressure last training camp just to make the team.

"I'm not gonna blow up over pressure," said Clayton, who has been running and lifting weights daily in preparation for the 1984 season. "The way I look at it, the pressure is always gonna be there, regardless of how you play, so you might as well not let it bother you. I look at this as a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I hope to make the most of it."

Tim Sassone

Blount

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the Minnesota goalline that preserved a 16-6 victory in Super Bowl X.

•A five-time Pro Bowl performer (1976-77-79-80-82), Blount was the NFL's Most Valuable Defensive Player in 1975 when he intercepted the team-record 11 passes.

"I was never that concerned about individual accomplishments," he said. "A lot of people will say, 'You can still play, why did you retire? You could have been the only Steeler that played so many years, or did this or did that,' but people don't realize that those things are not really the ultimate. They're not that important because some day somebody will come along and out-do what you've done, so what you try to do is keep your priorities in order and really focus on the values and things that are meaningful to you.

"In my opinion, those records will someday be broken, but the friends I've made and the people I've met are friends for life," said Blount. "I value that friendship, my relationship with the community, my relationship with people most of all. That's the way I am. There's more to my life than just dollars and cents."

And there was more to Blount's distinguished career than the four Super Bowl winners he played on, the nine AFC Central Division championships he helped win and the year-in-and-year-out individual honors that came his way.

"The thing I will remember most is the people," he said. "We've struggled along the way, but the end result has been good. The people stand out because they're the ones you'll be associated with the rest of your life."

* * *

With the retirement of Blount, only eight Steelers remain who have played on the four Super Bowl championship teams -- Bradshaw, Franco Harris, Larry Brown, Jack Lambert, Donnie Shell, John Stallworth, Mike Webster and Loren Toews. Those players, and the ones who have retired in recent years, were part of something very special.

"It was unity and love for one another and the real desire for every individual to be successful," Blount listed as the reasons that set the Steelers apart from the other teams in the NFL at that time. "I think every individual had their own goals, but, at the same time, they put the team goals up first. We had a lot of good, strong leaders, people that really wanted something out of life. When you get enough people going after one thing, and they want it badly enough, it always seems to come their way."

One big, happy family, that was the Steelers, from the Rooneys on down, says Blount, himself one of 11 children.

"To me, Chuck (Noll) was a father figure, and he'll always be a father figure," Blount said. "As for the Rooneys, they always projected the image of the strong family, and, coming from that kind of family myself, I could relate to that. For me, I couldn't have been put in a better organization."

In a profession where the average career lasts between four and five years, Mel Blount has beaten the odds through hard work, dedication, loyalty and sacrifice. He wouldn't have had it any other way.

"Basically, I lasted 14 years because I lived the clean life," he said. "I played and trained hard. I've worked and really paid my dues. And paying your dues means staying in shape, training and eating properly. I stayed off the streets because I wasn't the type of guy who ran the streets. I came into the league married. I was a lucky man.

"Someone once told me luck is when preparation meets opportunity," said Blount. "I've prepared myself, and the opportunity presented itself."

Malone

(continued from page 14)

And Malone's situation?

"I can't worry about the other people," he says. "All I can do is prepare myself as if I'm going in there to win the job, because, in my mind, that's exactly what I'm doing."

If the chorus of Malone's song plays like an old, worn refrain, rest assured, it's the same one composed this past January, when it seemed as though he had a legitimate shot at being the Steelers' starter in the first-round playoff game with the eventual Super Bowl champion L.A. Raiders.

If Chuck Noll's coyness with the local media gave everyone rise to expect a minor surprise -- Malone, perhaps, could restore the confidence of a team sinking in its own self-doubt and that of a quarterback ready to bolt for Birmingham's dollars – Malone was certainly as taken in as anyone.

And a whole lot more disappointed.

"I think I was prepared," is about all he'll say of the matter. "I really worked hard during that week to prove that I was ready to play."

Today, he's prepared to work every bit as hard. If his words were sincere in January, they are virtually chisled in stone today. He is not one to sit around and watch as a career passes him by. He wants to play. If not now, certainly soon.

He realizes it could happen. As always, he realizes it might not.

"It's too hard to say right now," he allows, "because there are just too many things that could happen. If Terry comes back like Terry, it's going to be tough to keep him out of a job. With our young offense, he could make a lot of difference. Look at what he did last year in New York."

But, if Bradshaw's brilliant career ends on a sultry practice field in July . . .

"You try not to think about it," he says. "All I'm doing is getting Mark Malone ready to play. Whatever happens, happens. The Steelers know how I feel. They'd be unhappy, I'm sure, if I didn't want to play.

"I've got a lot of pride and confidence in my ability. I know I need the time on the field. No one goes out there and just starts doing everything right. But, with the preparation and the game experience, I know that I can play quarterback in the NFL."

But Woodley has already played. Led his team to the Super Bowl, in fact, just two seasons ago, before self-destructing in the Rose Bowl, setting an unofficial record for one man's futility.

There is a certain irony in the fact that, if Bradshaw's right elbow is still making creaking noises, Malone will have to defeat Woodley in a head-to-head duel for the right to inherit the hot-seat that Cliff Stoudt last year found to be a personal hell.

Malone, of course, was a first-round pick. Talented, physical, handsome, articulate.

Woodley was an afterthought, an eighth-round pick who'd spent most of his career at LSU splitting time with a guy named Steve Emsinger. The Steelers claim to have had an interest in Woodley in 1980, but say they backed off after having grabbed Malone in the first round. After all, at the time, with Bradshaw, Stoudt and Malone, they had the best of all worlds.

Now, they've just got a very clouded situation.

But, if Woodley balks at the thought of backing up Malone (he allows that playing caddie to Bradshaw would be an acceptable fate), Mark refuses to debate the issue.

"David was a good acquisition," he says tactfully. "We couldn't go into camp with all the uncertainty. I knew we had to deal for someone, and so it didn't surprise me at all.

"David's experienced. He took his team to a Super Bowl."

It's a dream -- the Super Bowl -- that Malone would like to fulfill himself, a dream that began a long time ago.

There are still those who gaze upon Mark Malone and shake their heads. One can almost see the wheels turning: "Would have made a great tight end," say their eyes.

Mark Malone says differently.

Come July, he may finally get to prove his point.

John Mehno

Bradshaw

(continued from page 3)

last year by Bundrick). He's had full motion of the elbow and no significant pain."

Still, the question will persist: Can Bradshaw withstand the jarring tackles in the emotion of an actual game?

"He can, but it still goes back to laying off of any extensive, demanding throwing until it is almost like new again," said Bundrick. "The elbow's been through so much that it had not had any kind of chance to improve. He started throwing last May, then went into training camp and had to go through it all again.

"What is encouraging from his standpoint is that we've treated two other athletes with identical injuries here in recent years, and both went back to their respective sports and were just like new. One played baseball, another tennis. Barring any further complications, Terry can be fine again."

Bradshaw plans to be fine again.

"Last year was the most depressing season I ever went through in my life, and I don't care to go through something like that again," he said. "When I saw what was happening, that I wouldn't be playing, I became very discouraged and bored. I really don't want to endure that kind of season again. That's why I am taking care of myself, listening to the doctors, getting the proper rest, doing everything I can to be like new again. I realize I may never return to being 100 percent, but I'm going to give it a good shot and get as close as I can."

During these off-season months, Bradshaw spends much of his time on his ranch down in Grand Cane, tending to the cattle and enjoying the serene surroundings of pine trees and dogwoods.

"I've been making a lot of speeches at various places, too," he said. "Can't believe these people still want to hear a supposedly washed-up quarterback, can you?"

The patented Bradshaw guffaw once again, this time his right arm slapping on the knee and his blond, chiseled features reacting appropriately.

Earlier in the year, Bradshaw travelled up to Ruston and accepted a bronzed plaque as one of the first seven inductees into Louisiana Tech University's newly created athletic Hall of Fame.

"The best thing about that plaque," he grinned, "is that whatever picture they used to recreate for it was probably the best I ever took. I actually had a full head of hair. They just don't make pictures like they used to, do they?"

Nope.

And they don't make many quarterbacks like Terry Bradshaw, either.

Bundrick

(continued from page 3)

as we're concerned, he's right on schedule.

"Everything we've prescribed seems to be working well. There haven't been any setbacks. We had Terry in here recently, and we were all encouraged by the progress he's made.

"The thing he needs to do most right now is to build up the elbow and the shoulder. Those are the two areas where he's got to add strength, and he seems to be doing just that.

"We're all looking forward to the day when we know he's 100 percent. We're confident that that day is not too far off.

"But he's determined to play football. He's in excellent shape, and his spirits are good. In our minds, he's gonna make it back."

Stellino On The NFL

Games Off The Field Just As Important To USFL

"If God wanted football played in the spring, he wouldn't have invented baseball."
-- Cleveland Browns coach Sam Rutigliano

* * *

As the United States Football League plunges into its sophomore season, it may have to wonder whether God would have invented Donald Trump if He had wanted football played in the spring.

The USFL is a league battling a huge identity crisis.

The USFL not only hasn't sold the American public on the idea of spring-summer football, it hasn't even sold all of its club owners on the idea.

While the league is supposedly promoting the concept of spring football, some of its owners -- notably the flamboyant Trump -- are talking publicly about switching to the fall, going head-to-head with the NFL.

Trump has even picked out the name for the game pitting the USFL champion against the Super Bowl winner -- the Galaxy Bowl, he's christened it.

There are other owners who aren't even remotely thinking about taking on the NFL. Instead, they're thinking about becoming part of the NFL. That's the game plan of Dr. Ted Diethrich and George Allen in Phoenix. They're hoping a few USFL teams eventually merge into the NFL and they want to be one of them.

But some owners don't have such grandiose ideas. They have a more somber view and are more concerned about rudimentary things -- like survival.

"In all candor, I would give the league a 60 to 70 percent likelihood of making it, of being there indefinitely," says Myles Tanenbaum, the owner of the Philadelphia Stars. "But it's like anything else. We can self-destruct."

What all this means is that the USFL is suffering obvious growing pains as it tries to avoid its own self-destruction. The owners don't seem to agree on what the philosophy of the league is.

The Trumps, the Edward DeBartolos and the Alfred Taubmans are spending big money while the Tanenbaums and owners in places like Denver and Oakland are sticking closely to the original policy of keeping a tight lid on salaries.

The big spenders got an ally when the new owner of the Los Angeles Express -- J. William Oldenburg -- apparently decided he was going to trump Trump.

Oldenburg set a new standard with the $40 million, 43-year contract he gave to BYU quarterback Steve Young. That one broke the bank. Of course, the deal isn't worth anything near $40 million in 1984 dollars because an annuity will cover the payments that extend to the year 2027. But even if it's worth about $9 million in 1984 dollars, which is actually closer to its real value, it's still a four-year pact worth over $2 million a year. That's double the contract that John Elway got a year ago, and nobody has been heard to suggest that Young is another Elway.

The man who engineered the contract was Don Klosterman, a former longtime NFL executive who was exiled by Georgia Frontiere in Los Angeles. Klosterman is a veteran of the old

Klosterman engineered Young's big contract.

AFL-NFL wars in the early 1960's and he can throw money around with the best of them when he finds an owner with an open checkbook.

One former NFL executive joked, "They say that Express owner is a billionaire, but Klosterman will have him down to a millionaire any day now."

The people getting the best laughs are the players. The war between the NFL and the USFL has become a bonanza for them.

Whether the USFL can survive this war is a question that hangs heavy over the league. The Denver team made money last year and the Oakland and Tampa Bay clubs all but broke even. The other nine lost something in the neighborhood of $30 million between them.

"We went into this as supposedly sound businessmen," said Tanenbaum. "I think Donald Trump is making a series of errors. We're going to end up hurting not only the NFL, but ourselves and each other."

But Chet Simmons, the USFL commissioner, is a guy who can put a good face on any situation.

"I don't think we'll spend ourselves out of business," he said. "We're doing our signing on a selective basis. We're not competing for every player available."

Tell that to Oldenburg. The Express has now signed 21 USFL draft choices, 10 of its own and 11 obtained in trades.

But Simmons scoffs at the notion that the Trumps and Oldenburgs will put together a few clubs that will dominate the league and make the rest of the teams second-class citizens.

"I remember that everybody said George Allen's team would run through the league like a hot knife through butter," he said. "We'll have to see what happens, but we don't want a league of 9-9 teams. That would be boring."

Simmons even claims that a guy like Trump is good for the league. "Donald is like taking a pebble and dropping it into a brook. The waves go beyond his market. They've had an impact around the country," he said.

But after Oldenburg signed Young, John Bassett of the Tampa Bay Bandits had a telling remark.

"All of this reminds me of the old commentary that goes, 'when a man of money meets up with a man of experience, the man with the experience usually ends up with the money and the man with the money usually ends up with the experience.' "

Bassett now is known mainly as the father of a young tennis star, but he is a man of experience. He was in the World Football League when he lured Larry Csonka, Paul Warfield and Jim Kiick from the Miami Dolphins. He managed to wreck the Dolphins at that time, but he didn't save the WFL.

"I have no intention of going bankrupt signing wealthy players. I have had the experience some of our owners have now. I have lost my $10 million," he said.

Bassett went around that track once before when the World Football League folded.

Is the USFL going to make the same mistake or is it going to find a way to thrive and prosper?

That's the question that faces the league that has made its biggest impact on pro football in escalating salaries for both leagues. It remains to be seen if it will ultimately have more of an impact.

That's why the games being played off the field now are more important than the games being played on the field.

Steelers Weekly at-large columnist Vito Stellino is a veteran National Football League reporter.

To Our Readers

What could possibly be any better than this information-packed issue of the Pittsburgh Steelers Weekly? Well, how about the draft-coverage issue of the Weekly.

We'll highlight all the moves leading up to the draft, the draft itself, and, of course, we'll offer our usual insightful looks at the thought process surrounding the Steeler draft decisions. Also, we'll feature our extended, thumbnail looks at the Steelers' Class of '84, along with a feature on the team's first-round draft pick.

Joel Buchsbaum will be aboard to analyze the Steeler picks, and we'll talk with Steeler personnel director Dick Haley. We'll also update Terry Bradshaw's rehabilitation, and look at the team's rookie orientation camp.

All that and the usual informative features in next month's issue of the Pittsburgh Steelers Weekly, mailed to you on May 18.

From The Sidelines

RingTheBell on Archive.org

Quarterback On Their Minds

MALONE STILL THE MAN?

Dear Steelers Weekly:

Now that the Steelers have acquired David Woodley, it settles one problem for them -- the possibility of going into the '84 season with just one quarterback. But what I find myself worried about now is who is going to be the starter.

Like most everyone else, I would love to see Terry Bradshaw come back and be the starter, but, if he isn't able to return, will it be Woodley or Mark Malone? I know that Woodley has more game playing experience than Malone, but I feel that Chuck Noll should give Malone a chance. I think Malone deserves the first shot at the job.

First of all, Malone has been with the team longer. Also, he's got a lot of potential from what I've seen of his few appearances. But last, and maybe most importantly, Mark will be going into his option year in 1984. If Noll doesn't at least give Malone a shot at the job this season, he might end up losing Malone altogether.

Chuck Noll should leave the starter's role up in the air for the time being. He should let Mark and David fight it out in camp for the starting job, assuming Terry can't come back. He's got all of camp plus the preseason to determine who the better quarterback of the two is.

Just because the Steelers had to trade for Woodley, I don't think that means he should automatically become the starter. If Terry can't come back, maybe Noll should consider rotating quarterbacks, the way he did with Bradshaw, Hanratty and Gilliam in the early '70s when Terry was still developing.

Sincerely,
Liza Grosch
Norfolk, VA

Right now, the quarterback situation is right up in the air, isn't it? Until there's some determination as to whether Terry Bradshaw can return or not -- and that probably won't come until training camp -- no one knows what's going on.

The Steelers traded for David Woodley because, as it now stands, they have only one healthy quarterback, and even he's just a year removed from major knee surgery. You just can't afford to go into camp with that type of situation.

Our feelings about the Woodley trade take up a major portion of this issue so we won't use this space to reiterate them. But, rest assured, Chuck Noll didn't part with a draft pick, and the Steelers didn't come up with the kind of money they're paying David Woodley -- plus conduct a major press conference for a guy who was a third-string quarterback with his last team -- just to have him sit around. Woodley's meant to be more than just an expensive insurance policy.

Also, rest assured that Mark Malone will get, we believe, a real chance at winning the job. However, longevity alone isn't going to earn him the starting spot. If that were the case, David Woodley would have played ahead of Dan Marino in Miami last season, and Don Strock would have played ahead of Woodley.

By the way, Mark Malone will not be in his option year in 1984. Prior to the Woodley trade, the Steelers had re-signed Mark to a new contract.

CLARIFY ON BINGHAM

Dear Steelers Weekly:

The trade for David Woodley has left me perplexed. Why would the Steelers trade for a quarterback when they already have Mark Malone? Is something wrong with Mark? I am sure the Steelers would not have used a first-round draft pick on a player if they didn't think he could play quality football. Are the Steelers not telling the public something -- such as Malone signing with the USFL? Between Malone and Woodley, who will see more playing time?

I would also like to know about linebacker Craig Bingham. The *Steelers Weekly* stated that Bingham should be given a chance to play, and another issue

Despite the signing of Woodley, the Steeler quarterback situation is still up in the air.

said Bingham should not be around next season. What's the correct opinion?

In the April issue, you stated that the Steelers would probably not get much more than a sixth-round draft pick for Anthony Washington. How can that be? Washington is still very young, and he was a second-round draft pick. He also replaced Vernon Dean for the Redskins. Even though Washington still gets burned deep quite a bit, the Steelers should get a higher pick than that for a guy who started in the Super Bowl.

In closing, just let me say that the *Steelers Weekly* is doing a super job, and I'm looking forward to next season and the "Steel Heat."

Thank you,
Peter Inouye
Sacramento, CA

See the above letter for the Woodley-Malone story.

As for Craig Bingham, what you read were two obviously different opinions by two different writers. When you ask which is the right opinion, you're asking a question that's nearly impossible to answer.

If his talent were so obvious that it screamed at the coaches, then he'd be playing, wouldn't he? The jury's still very much out in his case. Again, we present several columnists, and we don't pretend that their views are always going to correspond. In fact, in a lot of cases, we hope they don't. That's what makes for good conversation.

As for the Washington trade, the Steelers will get a fourth-round draft pick, and you can bet it's only that high because of the fact that Washington became a starter for the Redskins. Don't ever think that just because a player was drafted in the first or second round that, if that player fails to live up to that draft status, you should get equal payment in return when you trade him. Would you, for instance, give the Steelers a first-round pick right now for Greg Hawthorne? On the other hand, if you were the Steelers and you were trying to trade Frank Pollard, would you settle for an 11th-round pick? That's all Pollard was. See what we mean?

ONE MAN'S OPINION

Dear Steelers Weekly:

David Woodley. Ha.

Sincerely,
Jerry Shirey
Laurel, DE

Wow. We had some real doubts when we first heard about the trade, too, but they weren't as harsh as yours are. After talking to some NFL personnel types who feel Woodley's an excellent athlete, we're willing to wait and see him in action before we make any judgements.

MORE WEIGHT FOR LAMBERT?

Dear Steelers Weekly:

I have been a great fan of Jack Lambert for as long as he's been playing with the Steelers. In his earlier years, he was a very intense player and was terribly intimidating. Now that he is getting older, he has become less intimidating and less intense, and he is playing on his ability alone.

In my opinion, Jack needs to gain at least 15 pounds in order to keep playing up to his abilities. My reasoning is that, after watching Jack closely for the last two years, I feel he's getting hit too often by guards who sometimes outweigh him by 25-30 pounds.

What is your opinion?

Thank you,
Mark Fordon
Flossmoor, IL

If we interpret what you're saying correctly, your biggest concern seems to be that Jack Lambert is losing some intensity. First off, that just isn't true. There's no more intense player in the NFL. Ask anyone who saw last season's Pittsburgh-Tampa Bay game. Secondly, intensity has nothing to do with weight. If it did, Chuck Noll would be out drafting a team full of 300-pounders.

True, Lambert's always going to give away weight to the offensive guards he has to go up against -- and it's more like 50-70 pounds at times, not the 25-30 pounds you mention -- but Jack's biggest asset has always been his speed. Adding weight would deprive him of that. How many linebackers are left in the league who still play all the downs? Not many, that's for sure. Most inside linebackers nowadays find themselves on the sidelines on obvious passing downs. Not Jack Lambert.

Nope, we respectfully disagree strongly with your opinion. Jack Lambert's skills are still intact, and, as long as he maintains a fierce love for the game -- and he's still got that -- you have little to worry about.

WHO'S SIGNED?

Dear Steelers Weekly:

In your January issue, you printed a sample draft. How many of the following players have signed contracts with the USFL: Allanda Smith, DB, TCU; Don Maggs, OT, Tulane; Terry Nugent, QB, Colorado State; Pete Mandley, WR, Northern Arizona; Mitchell Montgomery, TE, Grambling.

Thank you,
Scott Nace
West Palm Beach, FL

Of the players you mention, Allanda Smith (L.A. Express), Don Maggs (Pittsburgh Maulers) and Mitchell Montgomery (Oakland Invaders) have signed with USFL teams.

TRADE, DON'T DRAFT

Sirs:

With all of the USFL signings having taken away many of the quality players from this year's NFL draft, I think that a change of emphasis for the Steelers might well be in order.

The Steelers have always been a team that prided themselves on being built through the draft, but this year I'm not so sure that any team's going to get much help from the draft, the Steelers included. It's bad

(continued on page 27)

Still Good Players Out There -- Haley

BY TIM SASSONE

As is to be expected, Steeler director of player personnel Dick Haley doesn't mention anyone by name when questioned about the team's plans for the upcoming collegiate draft, set for May 1.

"We're still evaluating people at a number of positions," Haley insists, as he does every year.

While it's no real secret what positions the Steelers could use immediate help at -- offensive tackle, cornerback, wide receiver and running back -- just which players the Steeler braintrust favors to fill the void is anyone's guess.

One thing is certain, the talent available in this year's draft isn't what it has been in years past, or even what it could have been a few months ago, before the USFL stepped in and started signing top-round players at a rapid rate.

According to some NFL scouts, the new league has cut into the pool of available talent for the NFL by 15-to-20 percent, making an already-thin group of graduating seniors just that much thinner.

And that doesn't bode well for the Steelers, who are already drafting low in the first round (23rd). What that means is that many of the players drafted in Round One this year could be of second- or third-round ability.

Although Haley says there are still "a lot of good football players out there," he admits this year's draft presents a difficult challenge for everyone around the league.

"No question it would have been deeper," Haley said. "Of course it wasn't as deep as last year when you had the redshirt rule in effect, but anytime you take out the number of players the USFL has done, and the draft wasn't so great to begin with, then it's bound to have an effect."

Haley offered the offensive line as a prime example. "That was a real good group," he said, "but now they've taken some people out (like Texas center Mike Ruether, Oregon guard Gary Zimmerman, Baylor tackle Mark Adickes and Tulane tackle Don Maggs), so the depth isn't there. We think, however, there are still some very good players at linebacker, both inside and outside, and defensive back."

Depth at defensive back is good news for the Steelers, who have to list cornerback very high on their priority list, what with the retirement of veteran All-Pro Mel Blount. While the Steelers say they think youngsters Harvey Clayton and Sam Washington can step in and fill the vacancy, there has to be some concern because neither player has the combination of size and speed teams today feel they need at that position.

Three of the defensive backs the Steelers are rumored to be most interested in are Southern Methodist's Russell Carter, a college safety who could be moved to cornerback in the pros, Texas' Mossy Cade and Clemson's Rodney McSwain. Of the three, Carter has the most talent, but Haley doesn't think he'll survive until the 23rd pick. Between Cade and McSwain, the latter may rate the edge because of his size (6-0, 198). Cade is more in the Harvey Clayton mold (5-11, 175). Two other cornerbacks the Steelers have shown an interest in are Colorado's Victor Scott and Oklahoma State's Chris Rockins. In fact, sources indicate that Chuck Noll has personally worked out McSwain, Scott and Rockins.

The long work days prior to the draft are nearly over for Steeler director of player personnel Dick Haley (rear) and pro talent scout Tom Modrak.

If the Steelers don't go for a defensive back in the first round, they'll most likely opt for an offensive lineman, despite the lack of depth throughout that position. "There are certainly some offensive linemen who could contribute fairly quick," Haley said.

With veteran Larry Brown now 35 years old and on the shelf with injuries most of laat season, that may be a necessity for the guy the Steelers draft. Ted Petersen and Tunch Ilkin are still around, but they've had their inconsistent moments. As for John Meyer, a second-round pick two years ago, he'll likely miss his third-straight season after recently undergoing yet more knee surgery. The loss of Meyer makes it even more critical for the Steelers to get some immediate help on the offensive line.

Among the offensive linemen the Steelers reportedly have shown an interest in are Iowa tackle John Alt, Maryland guard Ron Solt and Pitt center Jim Sweeney. Alt could be the guy the Steelers covet most. The All-Big Ten performer has great size, at 6-7, 270, and is quick. Solt, while a guard in college, is 6-3, 270, and might be versatile enough to play several positions, a trait Chuck Noll savors. As for Sweeney, a center, Steeler Mike Webster has called the Pitt star a future NFL All-Pro. He was rated right behind Ruether at his position. If the Steelers do select a lineman, it will be a first for the team since Noll became coach.

It's unlikely the Steelers will go for a wide receiver or running back with their first pick, or even a defensive lineman. The defensive line has become a spot that'll warrant consideration because of the loss of Gabe Rivera. "Losing Gabe Rivera is really going to hurt us," Haley said. "That's now a place we could use another guy."

The Steelers could go for a wide receiver in Round Two, with Northern Arizona's Pete Mandley being the name most prominently mentioned. Of course, the Steelers could decide to stand pat at wide receiver and hope for a healthy year from John Stallworth, continued improvement from Cal Sweeney and better sophomore seasons from Wayne Capers, Gregg Garrity and Paul Skansi. One thing to keep in mind is that the wide receiver group is fairly deep this year, meaning the Steelers could wait even longer than the second round before picking a pass catcher.

As for drafting a running back, don't expect the Steelers to go that way until the later rounds. This year's group is thin, there's no one to step in and make an immediate impact a la Curt Warner and Eric Dickerson, plus the Steelers aren't ready to give up on Walter Abercrombie. Last year, Abercrombie showed some flashes of the ability the Steelers were hoping for when they made him their top choice in 1982.

In addition, Franco Harris is back, although he may no longer be the Steelers' top back in the offensive scheme, and Frank Pollard proved in '83 that he can be a quality NFL running back when given the chance to play. If Pittsburgh does draft a running back, he may be one whose potential is down the line.

With the recent acquisition of David Woodley from Miami, the Steelers are no longer faced with the problem of drafting a quarterback in the early rounds. The Steelers like to think they're on fairly solid ground with Woodley and Mark Malone, and, if Terry Bradshaw does come back, it's a bonus.

"Had we not made a deal, we would have been sitting there at the draft with one healthy quarterback," Haley said. "We might have been forced to find someone who might have had to come in and play right away, and that's a lot of pressure to put on a rookie quarterback.

"The best thing that could happen would be to have Bradshaw come back 100 percent, then we've got a pretty solid position," Haley said.

The price for Woodley was a third-round draft choice this year, but the Steelers felt they could sacrifice that pick because they had two coming their way on the fourth round -- their own and Washington's from the Anthony Washington trade.

According to *Pro Football Weekly's* draft expert Joel Buchsbaum, one quarterback the Steelers might be interested in is Purdue's Scott Campbell. Last year, the Steelers passed up Pitt's Dan Marino in the first round. It'll be interesting to see if the Steelers again pass on a highly-touted signal caller early, especially if Duke's Ben Bennett and West Virginia's Jeff Hostetler are available.

Other players Buchsbaum thinks the Steelers might be interested in are cornerback McSwain, wide receiver Mandley, South Carolina offensive tackle Rusty Russell, Baylor running back Allen Rice, Youngstown State tight end John Goode, Georgia defensive back Darryl Jones and Tennessee offensive tackle Curt Singer.

"We'll do what we usually do and draft the people we feel best suit our needs," Haley said.

Position By Position

Who's Who In The Draft

On the following four pages we present this year's position-by-position draft preview, our biggest and best ever.

Our preview features the nation's top 100 collegiate players, and also highlights many others at each position, all from the files of the country's top draft analyst, Joel Buchsbaum of Pro Football Weekly.

Joel's insightful comments detail each player's strengths and weaknesses, and the sketches are presented in Joel's usual concise, pithy style.

QUARTERBACKS

NORMAN "BOOMER" ESIASON (6-3¼, 208, 4.8-5.0) Maryland -- Big and strong. Tough, physical runner with some escape dimension. Can throw when rolling to either side. Very strong arm. Really drives the ball. Nice, compact delivery. Can unload in a hurry, but scatters the ball at times. Lacks a soft passing touch. May be a little too bold and cocky, but he's a bold, aggressive leader. Left-handed passer.

JEFF HOSTETLER (6-2, 215, 4.75-4.9) West Virginia -- Excellent stature. Very good athlete. Take-charge leader who generally finds a way to win. Extremely smart and competitive. Tough, physical runner who has some vision and weave. Looks natural running the ball and knows when to switch it from hand to hand. Can avoid the rush and throw while sprinting out to either side of the field. Fine vision and awareness. Has a nice touch, but also has poor mechanics. Has an extended overhand delivery, rolls shoulder into delivery and throws with a stiff elbow. Inconsistent throwing the ball. Academic All-American.

BEN BENNETT (6-1, 205, 4.9-5.05) Duke -- Great competitor. Exudes confidence. Will not be intimidated. Good athlete who does a fine job of avoiding the rush. Extremely accurate passer with a nice, smooth, compact overhand delivery. Can finesse the ball between defenders and is accurate at all distances. Looks off the defense and can set up the defender with a pump fake. Spent four years running a pro-type offense. Lacks running speed. Poor work habits. Biggest knocks are that he doesn't lift weights or work on his conditioning during the offseason.

TERRY NUGENT (6-3¼, 210, 4.85-5.05) Colorado State -- Ideal stature. Avoids the rush and can shake off tacklers. Above-average-to-good arm strength, accuracy and touch. Shows some awareness. Tough. Very coachable. Has improved every year. Has a very long stride. Doesn't set up very well. Will force the ball into traffic at times. Isn't a real take-charge leader. Aside from his size, has no truly outstanding physical characteristic. Doesn't really stand out in any area but does a lot of things reasonably well.

RANDY WRIGHT (6-1, 192, 4.78-4.93) Wisconsin -- Tough, gutty performer. Plays hurt and will not be intimidated. Fairly good athlete. Can sprint out and scramble. Nice, quick release. Has some zip, but isn't that consistent throwing the ball. Will hang some passes up for grabs. Throws before he's set at times and doesn't have a strong enough arm or wrist to get away with that.

STEVE PELLUER (6-3½, 205, 4.85-5.0) Washington -- Nice size. Good work habits. Smart. Will take what the defense gives him. Accurate short passer. Completed 67.2 percent of his passes as a senior. Doesn't really drive the ball. Will let the pressure get to him at times.

OTHERS: Louisville's **Dean May** has excellent size and will play hurt, but isn't particularly quick and is coming off shoulder surgery. **Scott Campbell** of Purdue is short and doesn't have a great arm, but he's accurate and displays good touch. Northern Michigan's **Tom Bertoldi** has good size and a pro arm. Tulane's **Jon English** is inconsistent, but is tall and poised with good touch.

FULLBACKS

ALFRED ANDERSON (6-1, 215, 4.6-4.7) Baylor -- Fine all-around athlete. He's big and can get bigger. Runs hard. Good balance. Breaks tackles. Fine acceleration for his size. Can get outside and turn the corner. Sets up and throws the option pass well. Good receiver. Lacks running style and elusiveness and needs to improve his blocking. Slashing-type runner. Played halfback in 1980.

NORM GRANGER (5-9, 215, 4.6-4.7) Iowa -- Strong legs and thighs. Runs low to the ground. Good balance. Quick. Has acceleration. Shows some niftiness and weave. Is very difficult to tackle. Blocks well. Seems to double-catch too many passes, and will fumble at times. Lacks height. Runs a lot better in some games than in others.

ALBERT BENTLEY (5-10¼, 205, 4.7-4.87) Miami (Fla.) -- Tough back with quick upfield moves. Excellent extra-effort runner who breaks tackles. Smart, physical blocker. Does a fine job of picking up the blitz. Good receiver. Versatile. Can play halfback, tailback, fullback and return kickoffs. Can do everything except run a good 40-yard dash.

DAVE D'ADDIO (6-2, 236, 4.8-4.9) Maryland -- Excellent size. Good all-around athlete. Strong runner. Catches the ball well. Solid blocker. Gives you everything he has. Could play tight end or linebacker. Lacks speed and moves. Separated his left shoulder as a senior. Complimentary-type back who'll do the little things.

ROBERT "SPEEDY" NEAL (6-1½, 240-260, 4.7-4.95) Miami (Fla.) -- Great natural size. Can catch the ball. Gifted athlete, but not a physical runner or blocker. Rarely breaks tackles with his legs. Has a weight problem. Coming off shoulder surgery. Potential far exceeds production.

ANDRE HARDY (6-1½, 227, 4.6-4.7) St. Mary's College (Calif.) -- Gifted athlete. Big and strong. Fine speed for size. Good receiver. Can return kickoffs. Likes to be featured at tailback. Must improve his blocking. Doesn't always play up to his ability. Has some loose ends in his past.

OTHERS: Southern Mississippi's **Clemon Terrell** has good size and speed, but seems to lack intensity. **Dwaine Wright** of Arizona State is a strong runner and blocker with some outside speed. **Vaughn Broadnax**, Ohio State, has Pete Johnson-type size, but could end up projecting to guard or nose tackle. **Frank Cephous** of UCLA isn't big, fast or elusive, but has shown some ruggedness in the past. USC's **Todd Spencer** is a wreckless slasher who could use a bit more size.

RUNNING BACKS

STANFORD JENNINGS (6-0¼, 200, 4.55-4.65) Furman -- Smart runner. Sets up and uses his blocks well. Controls speed. Can really accelerate. Knows when to cut back. Does a nice job of weaving in the open field. Catches the ball well. Smart and a leader. Fumbles too much. Not blazing fast, and runs best when featured in the "I." An excellent tailback who catches the ball well.

JON WILLIAMS (5-9, 200, 4.45-4.65) Penn State -- Very quick and instinctive. Excellent lateral agility. Has many of Curt Warner's moves. Runs low to the ground with very good balance and body control. Good receiver. Will block. Versatile. Has played fullback and tailback. Can return punts and kickoffs. Lacks height. Has had some injury problems. May not be very durable. Inconsistent. Looks a lot like a short Curt Warner on his good days.

ERNEST ANDERSON (5-8¾, 185, 4.55-4.65) Oklahoma State -- Very quick and instinctive. Runs low to the ground. Exceptional balance and strength for his size. Great extra-effort runner. Cuts well. Can catch the ball. Runs north and south. Lacks size. Isn't that fast. Had injury problems as a senior. Bowlegged slasher-darter with 23-inch thighs. Small and lacks blazing speed but is a competitor with great instincts. An Archie Griffin-type back but more elusive.

MICHAEL GUNTER (5-10, 200, 4.5-4.7) Tulsa -- Quick and productive. Runs low to the ground with good balance. Has a burst. Strong. Runs hard. Gives you that good extra effort. Breaks tackles. Has trouble adjusting to and catching the ball. Had major knee surgery as a freshman. Very bowlegged. Effective runner who must improve his pass catching.

GREG BELL (5-11, 210, 4.45-4.65) Notre Dame -- Excellent athlete with size, speed and acceleration. Good hands. Can return kickoffs and punts. Shows flashes. Hasn't played much football the past two years due to injuries. Inconsistent. Doesn't always look instinctive or decisive. Lacks great cutting ability. Broke right fibula in the second game of the 1982 season. Sprained his right ankle in the third game of the 1983 campaign. Very hard to rate due to injuries but has prototype numbers.

ALLEN RICE (5-11, 200, 4.55-4.75) Baylor -- Excellent all-around athlete. Stocky, tough and determined. Quick. Cuts well. Has some running style. Good receiver. Physical blocker. Cut down on fumbles in 1983. Has never really had a chance to show what he can do. Had a major problem with fumbles in 1982. Lacks sustained speed. Has athletic ability and, if given a chance, could open some eyes.

OTHERS: Tyrone Anthony, North Carolina, has excellent receiving ability. Alabama's **Joe Carter** could be a prospect if he can cut down on fumbles. **John Walker** of Texas is a gifted athlete with size and speed. **Dwight Beverly** of Illinois has raw ability. Pitt's **Joe McCall** came on strong at the end of his career. **Lionel James** of Auburn, at 5-7, lacks only size.

TIGHT ENDS

DAVID LEWIS (6-2½, 230, 4.65-4.8) California -- Excellent athlete. Well-coordinated. Quick. Agile. Has the speed to get deep. Can release off the line quickly. Has some run-after-the-catch ability, but needs to improve his blocking. Inconsistent catching the ball. Has done some things to make you question his attitude. Played much better in 1982 than in 1983. The type of player who could make your draft or break your heart.

CLIFF BENSON (6-3, 233, 4.75-4.9) Purdue -- Very good athlete. Fluid. Catches the ball well. Strong runner. Plays hurt. Finesse blocker who generally takes the easy way out. Not a nifty runner after the catch. Somewhat inconsistent in overall play. Fine pass-catching tight end who must put a little more effort into his blocking.

ANDY PARKER (6-4½, 230, 4.65-4.85) Utah -- Fine athlete. Excellent size. Runs well. Soft hands. Adjusts to the ball. Will block. Came on as a senior. Still isn't a dominant player. Has only produced for one year. A player on the come who could go far if he continues to improve.

CHRIS KOLODZIEJSKI (6-2¾, 232, 4.65-4.8) Wyoming -- Above-average size. Very good speed. Catches well. Improving blocker. Really came on in 1983. Not that quick or nifty. Sat out the 1981 season because he was tired of football. Returned to the squad in 1982. Has enough ability to play in the NFL and could eventually start if he doesn't get footballed out again.

DON KERN (6-3, 220, 4.65-4.85) Arizona State -- Good speed. Jumps well. Excellent hands. Fearless. Will make the tough catches in traffic. Great competitor. Good athlete. Lacks a good blocking base. Must do everything perfect to be an adequate blocker. Played wide receiver in junior college. Led ASU in catches in 1983. Joe Rose-type player but tougher and better.

JOHN FRANK (6-1¾, 220, 4.7-4.85) Ohio State -- Very smart and competitive. Had an excellent senior year. Caught the ball well, broke tackles and blocked hard. Lacks size. Lacks speed for his size. Three-year starter. If he continues to catch, run and block like he did in 1983, John can be a motion tight end.

OTHERS: Wichita State's **Anthony Jones** is a good athlete who needs to sharpen his blocking. **Clarence Kay** of Georgia doesn't have great numbers, but produced well in college. **John Chesley**, Oklahoma State, needs some intensity. **Glenn Dennison** of Miami (Fla.) is a productive player.

WIDE RECEIVERS

IRVING FRYAR (5-11½, 195, 4.35-4.5) Nebraska -- An absolutely tremendous athlete. Great quickness and speed. Can jump through the roof. Good hands. Tremendous moves and broken-field running ability. Will catch over the middle. Strong and muscular. Brutal crackback blocker. Very dangerous and daring runner on reverses, returns and after the catch. Will drop some catchable balls because he gets lazy about his concentration or tries to nonchalant it. Is not a polished route runner, but has as much ability as any player in the draft. A gamebreaker who can do it all.

KENNY JACKSON (5-11½, 175, 4.4-4.55) Penn State -- Exceptional athlete. Great leaper with excellent body control. Quick, fast, fluid and acrobatic. Fine competitor. Will catch over the middle, fight for the ball and block. Good hands. Can return kicks. Has a narrow build. Did not have a good senior year, and isn't that consistent catching the ball. Still, he can be a Lynn Swann-type receiver.

LOUIS LIPPS (5-10, 185, 4.5-4.6) Southern Mississippi -- Super athlete. Excellent jumping ability. Superb body control. Good hands. Quick and nifty. Outstanding running instincts and ability. Dangerous kick returner. Fine competitor. Blocks. Will catch in traffic, but does lack polish. Needs work on running his pass routes. Exceptional receiver-returner with first-round potential.

RON BROWN (5-10, 182, 4.3-4.45) Arizona State -- Gifted athlete with world-class speed. Muscular. Can cut at almost full tilt. Adjusts to the ball. Hands are pretty good and should get better. Has only played one season (1982) at wide receiver and didn't play football in 1983. Raw around the edges. May not report to an NFL camp until after the 1984 Summer Olympics. Will only be draft eligible if he doesn't sign a pro contract

before the upcoming draft. Cleveland Browns' second-round pick in 1983, but he decided not to sign and to continue his track (sprinter) career with an eye toward the Olympics. Is considered one of the five-fastest humans in the world.

ERIC RICHARDSON (6-1, 188, 4.5-4.65) San Jose State -- Excellent athlete. Fluid. Cuts well. Fine hands. Good speed. Makes the tough catches. Instinctive. Adjusts to coverages. Rarely blocks, and doesn't run disciplined routes. Excellent ability, but he gets a little lazy when he knows he isn't going to get the ball.

CLYDE DUNCAN (6-1, 192, 4.4-4.55) Tennessee -- Great athlete. Very good size and speed. Tough. Will catch in a crowd. Lacks polish. Must develop hands and improve routes. A comer who could go very high.

DARYL TURNER (6-2½, 195, 4.5-4.7) Michigan State -- Excellent target. Tall and can jump. Very good athletic ability. Catches the ball well. Makes the difficult receptions. Has deceptive, gliding speed. Good moves. Gets open, however lets his concentration wander at times. Isn't a true burner, but is a quality big receiver.

DUANE GUNN (5-10, 172, 4.5-4.65) Indiana -- Excellent athlete. Very quick and tough. Jumps well and can hang in the air. Good hands. Nifty moves. Quick feet. Runs well after the catch. Dangerous kick returner. Will drop some catchable balls. Isn't a real burner. Small but plays well.

PETE MANDLEY (5-9¼, 185, 4.4-4.55) Northern Arizona -- Exceptional athlete. Quick, fast, elusive and acrobatic. Dangerous runner who makes people miss. Fine kick returner. Lacks height. Hasn't faced many top-flight defensive backs. Excellent small-college athlete with big-play ability.

DWIGHT COLLINS (6-1, 205, 4.5-4.65) Pittsburgh -- Fine athlete. Excellent size. Can run, jump and adjust to the ball. Size and jumping ability enable him to outwrestle defenders for the pigskin. Very inconsistent catching the ball. Not that tough. Doesn't like to stretch out and extend himself when going over the middle. Lacks quickness in his cuts. Needs work on pass routes. Often injured. Could be very good or very average.

OTHERS: Mitchell Brookins of Illinois could be a steal. Alabama's **Jesse Bendross** has deceptive speed and makes the big plays. **Brian Brennen** of Boston College lacks size and speed, but has great hands. **Curtland Thomas**, Missouri, is an acrobatic receiver who hasn't played that well since a broken leg in 1982. Florida State's **Weegie Thompson** is in between wideout and tight end, but has lots of ability.

CENTERS

JIM SWEENEY (6-3, 250, 4.9-5.05) Pittsburgh -- Good athlete. Excellent balance. Is rarely off his feet. Quick. Uses hands well. Fine pass blocker. Excellent technician. Can play guard. Very consistent. Isn't as big as you'd like. Started at both center and guard in 1983. Excellent player who could sneak into the first round if he gets a little bigger.

TONY SLATON (6-3, 265, 4.9-5.1) Southern Cal -- Good size. Quick. Effective cut and finesse blocker. Has the speed for guard. Durable. Lacks strength. Isn't a very physical player. Inconsistent. Developmental prospect who needs to get stronger.

JOEL HILGENBERG (6-3, 240, 4.95-5.1) Iowa -- Quick and active. Runs well. Smart. Has a feel for position. Makes the snap in the shotgun. Punt snapper. Often is the first man down on coverage. Can play guard. Looks small. Lacks strength. Must get bigger and stronger.

OTHERS: Scott Etzel of Northern Iowa has some potential. Minnesota's **Randy Rasmussen** is an average athlete, but is very dedicated. **Joe Dooley** of Ohio State runs well and could project to tackle. **Mark Cannon** of Texas-Arlington is a limited athlete who works hard and comes to play.

OFFENSIVE GUARDS

DEAN STEINKUHLER (6-3¼, 265, 4.75-4.95) Nebraska -- Very good athlete. Excellent speed. Great pulling and trapping lineman. Tremendous ability to adjust and uncoil while on the move. Explosive at the point of attack. Gets movement in his drive blocks. Has very good balance and body control. Outstanding work habits and character. Played in a running offense and needs work on pro-style pass blocking. Doesn't have a massive frame. A solid blue-chipper.

RON SOLT (6-2¼, 270, 4.85-5.05) Maryland -- Smart. Strong. Runs well. Can adjust on the move. Has good pop. Gets movement in his drive blocks. Solid pass protector. Excellent trap blocker. Fine technician. Understands position. Not a super athlete but a good one. Does just about everything well.

STEFAN HUMPHRIES (6-2¾, 262, 4.9-5.15) Michigan -- Very smart. Has an excellent feel for position. Can pull, trap and adjust on the move. Good athlete. Light on his feet. Generally a finesser who doesn't finish off his blocks. May not want a long pro football career, but a quality blocker who can start in the NFL.

DOUG DAWSON (6-2½, 260, 4.85-5.05) Texas -- Extremely smart. Great competitor. Very aggressive. Really gets after people. Comes off the ball well. Does a nice job of pulling and trapping. Adjusts well on the move. Is all pumped up at 260 pounds. Has very little growth potential, and may be handicapped by his short arms and legs. Lacks natural size but gets the most out of his ability.

GUY McINTYRE (6-2½, 263, 4.9-5.05) Georgia -- Very good athlete. Quick, fluid and explosive. Can come off the ball well. Gets movement in his drive blocks. Runs well. Played in a running offense and will need considerable work on pass protection. Has the physical tools to excel but must learn pro-style pass-blocking techniques and to bear down on every play.

DEREK KENNARD (6-1½, 270, 4.85-5.1) Nevada-Reno -- Looks like a guard with huge arms and legs and a big butt. Has a good blocking base. Strong and explosive. Extremely quick for size. Wants to play. Has dominated on his level. A little short. Has the body, quickness and strength you look for in a guard but must watch his weight.

PAUL FAIRCHILD (6-3½, 258, 4.8-5.05) Kansas -- All-out competitor. Tough and tenacious. Strong upper body. Can run, pull and trap. Has improved his techniques and developed a feel for position. Team leader. Isn't very big or athletic. A little stiff, but he has a good chance to make it.

MARK MacDONALD (6-3½, 260, 5.1-5.2) Boston College -- Great judgment and feel. Reliable, patient pass blocker. Sustains well. Can play guard or tackle. Not very big, fast or athletic. Somewhat short for a tackle and is a good step slower than you'd like at guard. Doesn't have great computer numbers but plays well.

OTHERS: Scott Raridon of Nebraska could be a prospect if he loses some weight. Notre Dame's **Neil Maune** could be a good one with maturity. **Paul Parker**, Oklahoma, has natural strength, but needs lots of work on pass-blocking. **Kirk McJunkin** of Texas could use some more size.

OFFENSIVE TACKLES

BILL ROBERTS (6-4½, 270, 4.95-5.15) Ohio State -- Fine size. Excellent athletic ability. Runs well. Can adjust on the move. Very quick off the ball. Gets into his block as fast as any tackle in the draft. Very good, patient pass blocker. Light on his feet and agile, but a little lazy. Doesn't always finish off his blocks. Inconsistent. Has great talent but is not as physical, intense or competitive as he should be. Could become an All-Pro if he'll pay the price.

BRIAN BLADOS (6-5¼, 305, 5.2-5.45) North Carolina -- A man mountain. Smothers people with his size. Good athlete. Instinctive. Understands position. Can adjust on the move. Has quick hands. Overweight. Runs out of gas. Isn't as physical as he should be, but could be outstanding if he matures and gets into shape.

CONRAD GOODE (6-5½, 265, 4.9-5.05) Missouri -- Tall. Runs well. Has a large wingspan, growth potential and athletic ability. Generally stays on his feet. Is an above-average drive blocker who can become a good one. Lacks strength, especially in the lower body. Must improve his pass-protection skills. Rarely finishes off his blocks. Has the ability to make it if he'll pay the price.

JOHN ALT (6-7, 270, 5.1-5.4) Iowa -- Great size. Long arms. Can get even bigger. Fine competitor. Shows a feel for position. Has some coordination for a big man. Should improve as he matures. Needs to get stronger. Lacks quickness. Average feet. Former tight end who moved to offensive tackle in 1982. Should get better if given a chance to mature but will never be a great, quick-footed tackle.

RON HELLER (6-5, 260, 4.95-5.1) Penn State -- Tall. Strong upper body. Knows how to use his long, powerful arms on pass protection. Good athlete. Runs well. Gets into his block quickly. Lacks a good blocking base and lower-body strength, but he should make it and could develop into a starter.

SCOTT BOLZAN (6-3½, 270, 5.05-5.2) Northern Illinois -- Had a good senior year. Has a big frame. Can get some movement in his drive block. Very hard worker, but isn't that good an athlete. Needs work on pass blocking. Has really come on, though.

DAVE PIEPKORN (6-6½, 265, 4.9-5.05) North Dakota State -- Great size. Long arms. Knows how to use his hands. Smart. Has excellent athletic ability. Fluid. Can really run. Can play guard or tackle. Finesse blocker who does not do much hitting. Runs tall. Doesn't use his strength. Began year at 290 pounds and looked sluggish until he lost weight. Could eventually excel if he'll hit.

OTHERS: Curt Singer of Tennessee is big, strong, slow. Arizona State's **James Keyton** lacks intensity, but has good size. **Pat Arrington** of Auburn gets the most out of his ability. **Ken Ruettgers**, USC, has good size but also has history of injuries.

DEFENSIVE ENDS

KEITH MILLARD (6-4¼, 252, 4.8-5.05) Washington State -- Very good athlete. Excellent pass rusher. Quick off the ball. Sheds blocks. Closes on the action. Has developed some moves. Fine competitor. Really wants to play. Lacks great natural size. Somewhat inconsistent. Not quite as massive as you'd like but plays hard and can rush the passer.

RON FAUROT (6-7, 260, 4.75-4.95) Arkansas -- Very tall. Long arms. Looks skinny at his present weight. Has growth potential to 280 pounds. Exceptional athlete with tremendous speed, agility, feet and balance for size, but had a poor senior year. Lacks the killer

Blue-chippers . . .

Players like (clockwise from top left) Baylor fullback Alfred Anderson, Purdue tight end Cliff Benson, Washington State defensive end Keith Millard and Duke quarterback Ben Bennett could step into the NFL and play right away.

instinct. Overly disciplined. Potential exceeds production. Has great, great ability and potential but is too nice, overly disciplined and did little to excite as a senior. Could be "King Kong in Shoulder Pads" or an OT projection.

DOUG SMITH (6-3¼, 280, 4.8-5.0) Auburn -- Excellent size and strength. Can dominate one blocker and tie up two. Power-type pass rusher with good quickness. Outstanding size-speed ratio. Could play left end or nose tackle in a 3-4, or tackle in a 4-3 defense. Inconsistent coming off the ball. Lacks finesse and pass-rush techniques. Has some trouble shedding blocks. Isn't very instinctive but has size, speed and strength and is starting to put things together.

ALPHONSO CARREKER (6-6, 255, 4.85-5.05) Florida State -- Tall. Should be able to get bigger. Fine athlete. Can run. Gets upfield and can rush the passer. Up-and-down player. Plays tall. Has some trouble taking on blockers. Gives ground to shed blockers. Doesn't change directions well. Will either be very good or very average. Has the tools you look for in a pass rusher, and his play vs. the run should get better.

ANDRE TOWNSEND (6-2½, 260, 4.9-5.1) Mississippi -- Has made vast strides in size, strength and intensity. Very good lateral mobility. Gets over trash. Makes plays. Is beginning to realize what it takes. Rather short. Lacks great upfield explosion. Has gained about 50 pounds since he enrolled in 1980. Three-year starter.

STEVE HAMILTON (6-4, 252, 4.8-5.0) East Carolina -- Looked like an excellent pro prospect as a junior. Showed fine athletic ability, quickness, agility and closing speed. Got over piles, chased plays down and displayed pass-rush potential. Senior year was a washout. Tried to play with a ligament problem in his left ankle and was ineffective.

OTHERS: Oklahoma's **Bob Slater** needs work in the weight room. **Chris Scott**, Purdue, has good pass-rush potential. **James Geathers** of Wichita State could be some help down the road.

DEFENSIVE TACKLES

RICK BRYAN (6-3½, 260, 4.9-5.15) Oklahoma -- Fine athlete. Great specimen. Very strong. Has excellent technique vs. the run. Gets over piles and runs people down in pursuit. Well-coordinated. Uses hands and arms to shed blocks. Works very hard. Goes hard until he's on empty. Has short arms, and may never be a great pass rusher. An overachiever who generally produces well.

BILL MAAS (6-4, 265, 4.9-5.2) Pittsburgh -- Big, mean and nasty. Strong. Comes off the ball well. Very quick for size. Explosive. Uses his hands and arms to shed blocks. Gets upfield. Lacks discipline. Likes to freelance. Seems to have trouble locating the ball at times. Doesn't always protect his legs and gets cut down. Looks great at times, so-so at others.

PETE KOCH (6-5½, 260, 4.85-5.05) Maryland -- Great body. Looks skinny at his present weight. Has long arms and tremendous upper-body strength. Comes off the ball well at times. Has the speed to get upfield. Hustles in pursuit. Doesn't always come off the ball well or protect his knees. Has some problems shedding blocks. Bench-presses over 450 pounds. Shows flashes and has great physical potential. Will be awesome if he puts it all together.

ERIC WILLIAMS (6-4, 260, 4.95-5.15) Washington State -- Quick. Good athlete. Comes off the ball well. Has improved every year. Isn't that strong, physical or emotional. Can play in the NFL if he wants to. Could use a little more ferocity.

SCOTT GARNETT (6-2, 265, 4.9-5.2) Washington -- Very good athlete. Quick. Has an upfield surge. Very strong. Can stuff the blocker. Is able to defeat the double-team block. Has broken his foot three times. Lacks height. Missed time in 1981, '82 and '83 because of foot. Bench-presses about 500 pounds and squats over 650. If well, can excel.

JAMES ROBINSON (6-3½, 310, 5.0-5.2) Clemson -- Bigger than the Goodyear blimp. Very strong. Extremely quick and athletic for size. Can get over piles. Has an upfield surge. Is at least 25 pounds overweight. As a result, he wears down, lets up and has trouble changing directions. Will make a fine pro if he gains intensity and loses weight but could be a big, fat bust if he doesn't.

DONNIE HUMPHREY (6-2, 275, 4.9-5.4) Auburn -- Massive. Very good athlete. Quick, strong and nasty. Had major knee surgery in 1982 and strained knee ligaments in 1983. Lacks height. Seems to play in spurts. Inconsistent coming off the ball. If his knee is 100 percent, he can play, but that's a big if.

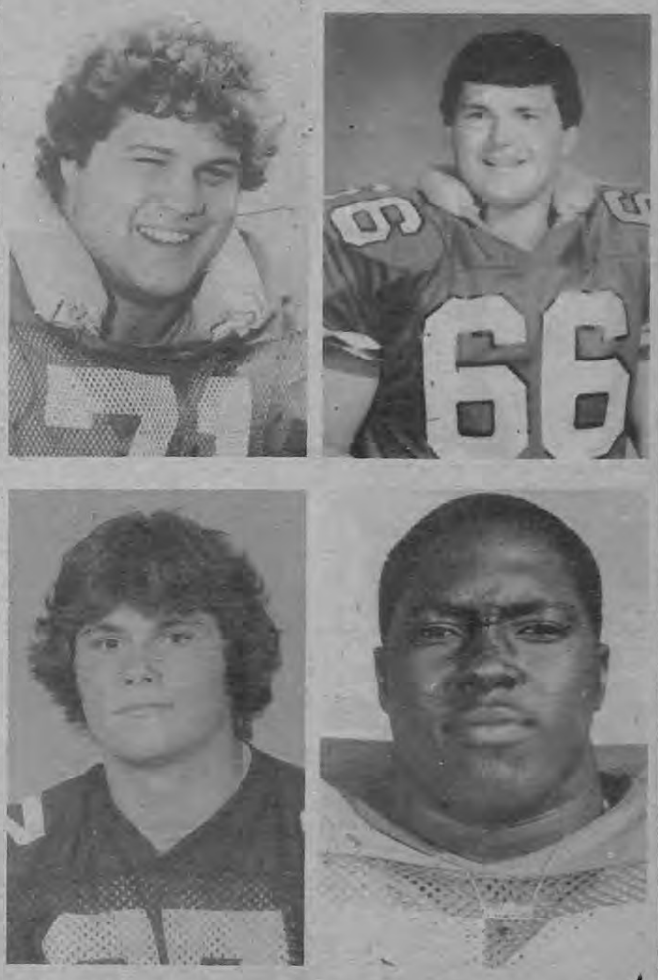
OTHERS: SMU's **Michael Carter** has ability but lacks production. **Keith Guthrie**, Texas A&M, needs prodding, but has ability. Illinois' **Don Thorp** is a limited athlete, but a producer. **Blaise Winter** of Syracuse has shown lots of improvement.

INSIDE LINEBACKERS

RICKY HUNLEY (6-1¼, 235, 4.6-4.8) Arizona -- Very strong, physical and intense. Great hitter and competitor. Fine speed. Has become much more positive to the ball and has improved on coverage. Plays best in the clutch, but has some trouble shedding blocks. Isn't very fluid. Still has some problems playing the pass. Is starting to look like Willie Lanier and Mike Singletary but isn't quite as instinctive or aware.

RON RIVERA (6-2, 230, 4.7-4.95) California -- Smart. Excellent competitor. Goes hard until he's on empty. Strong at the point of attack. Sheds blocks well. Excellent pass rusher. Has a knack for finding gaps to blitz through. Makes lots of big plays. Came on like gangbusters and flat-out dominated as a senior. Still, he isn't a great open-field athlete. Excellent football player who dominates when rushing the passer and stands out vs. the run but needs work playing in space. How well he plays in space will determine just how good he becomes.

Linemen Abound . . .



Where's the beef? There's a lot of it in this year's draft, including (clockwise from top left) Pitt defensive tackle Bill Maas, Maryland guard Ron Solt, Ohio State offensive tackle Bill Roberts and Iowa offensive tackle John Alt.

STEVE DeOSSIE (6-1½, 238, 4.8-5.05) Boston College -- Big, strong, smart, tough, competitive and instinctive. Reacts well. Takes excellent angles of pursuit. Can stuff opponents. Plays quicker than his time. Has done some deep snapping. Lacks sustained speed. Separated his shoulder early in the 1983 season. Quality inside linebacker who didn't play that well in 1983 after his shoulder injury.

SCOTT RADECIC (6-3, 244, 4.8-5.0) Penn State -- Excellent size. Strong. Good athlete. Has some quickness and speed. Looked like a potential first-rounder at times in 1982, but ended up having a terrible senior year. Played soft, was slow reacting and looked sluggish. Could be very good or very average. Looked like a faster, less instinctive Lance Mehl as a junior but didn't seem to have his head in the game as a senior.

THOMAS BENSON (6-1½, 240, 4.5-4.7) Oklahoma -- Super athlete with rare speed and strength. Very aggressive. Explosive, bone-jarring hitter. Wants to play, but isn't very instinctive. Looks lost at times. Gets caught out of position. Bites on play-action fakes. Still, he runs like a deer and hits like a truck. Fastest big linebacker in the draft. Could become something special if he can be grooved into a team's system.

JACKIE SHIPP (6-2, 230, 4.7-4.85) Oklahoma -- Big and strong. Has good speed. Can fill quickly. Likes to free-lance. Guesses and leaves gaping holes when he's wrong. Has trouble taking on and shedding blocks. Doesn't move like a great athlete. Should make it if he's willing to play within the confines of the defense.

ROWLAND TATUM (6-0½, 225, 4.8-4.9) Ohio State -- Good athlete. Active and instinctive. Has a knack for avoiding blocks. Is generally around the ball. Gets depth on his pass drops. Tackles well in the open field. Hard hitter with a nasty disposition. Has played inside and outside. Lacks height and sustained speed. Rather inconsistent. Quicker than his time and makes plays but isn't quite as big or reliable as you'd like.

OTHERS: Mike Johnson of VPI is smart but undersized. **Gary Reasons** of Northwestern Louisiana State has size and production, lacks speed. Texas' **Jeff Leiding** is big, mean and nasty.

OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

CARL BANKS (6-3½, 230, 4.7-4.85) Michigan State -- Fine size. Excellent athletic ability. Fluid. Instinctive. Takes good angles of pursuit. Can burst to the ball. Dominates in some games. Has had some subpar games when he just seems to be going through the motions. Needs work on pass coverage. Has All-Pro potential but must play every game as if it's the most important game he'll ever play.

WILBER MARSHALL (6-0½, 220, 4.55-4.7) Florida -- Excellent athlete. Great body. Quick, fast and instinctive. Can really accelerate to the ball. Explosive hitter who plays bigger than his size. Stays on his feet. Very agile. Changes direction well. Super blitzer. Makes plays sideline-to-sideline. Can stay with a back on pass coverage. Major shortcoming is that he's an up-and-down player. Isn't a very disciplined individual. Broke a bone in his right hand (second game, 1983) and played with a cast on his hand for much of the season. Ability is no concern, but attitude could become one if he's not handled correctly.

KEITH BROWNER (6-5, 230, 4.65-4.8) Southern Cal -- Excellent athlete. Tall, fast, fluid, strong and nasty. Difficult to block due to his size, speed and coordination. Hard to throw over because of his height and long arms. Fine pass rusher. Can dominate the game when he wants to. Inconsistent player and competitor who only plays hard when he feels like it. Lacks great change of direction. Had a disappointing senior year. An underachiever with All-Pro tools.

BILLY CANNON JR. (6-3½, 215, 4.6-4.7) Texas A&M -- Excellent all-around athlete.

Can get bigger. Very quick in all directions. Reacts well. Excellent hands. Returns punts. Very raw. Just played one year at outside linebacker and still has a way to go. Needs to get bigger and stronger. Must learn how to use his hands to take on blockers. Could be a faster Brad Van Pelt if everything falls into place.

ED WILLIAMS (6-2½, 237, 4.7-4.8) Texas -- Very good athlete. Excellent size for an outside linebacker. Quick, explosive and fluid. Can really run. Gets upfield well, but has a lot to learn about playing linebacker. Has all the measurable tools for a linebacker, but can't say if he has the feel and instincts for the position.

MIKE GUENDLING (6-2½, 230, 4.75-4.95) Northwestern -- Smart. Good size. Plays hard. Instinctive. Effective blitzer with a knack for avoiding blockers. Above-average open-field athlete. Improves every year. Isn't quite as fast as you'd like. Lacks great physical tools, and great stopwatch speed but plays well and is still in the improving stage.

BOBBY BELL JR. (6-2, 216, 4.6-4.8) Missouri -- Quick, active and athletic. Can keep pace with a back. Blitzes well. Improves every year. On the small side. Lacks strength. Has trouble taking on and shedding blocks. Should do well on special teams and on passing downs..

JEFF PEGUES (6-1, 237, 4.65-4.8) East Carolina -- Excellent athlete. Big and can really run. Shows flashes of brilliance. Has fine pass-rush potential. Improves every year, but, still, production doesn't always match potential. Needs work on pass coverage. Very raw around the edges.

JOHNNY MEADS (6-0, 220, 4.6-4.75) Nicholls State (La.) -- Great athlete. Very quick and active. Has excellent range vs. the run. Fine hitter. Plays hard. Lacks upper-body strength. Better on plays away from him than on those run right at him. Needs work on pass coverage. Small but active and athletic. Should be a high draft pick.

OTHERS: Fred Young, New Mexico State, makes the plays, despite lack of athletic skills. **Rydell Malancon** of LSU is enthusiastic and plays hard. Oklahoma's **Daryl Goodlow** lacks consistent production. **Kyle Clifton**, TCU, was in on a lot of tackles in his career.

CORNERBACKS

LEONARD COLEMAN (6-1, 195, 4.46-4.7) Vanderbilt -- Fine size. Very fluid for his size. Breaks on the ball. Doesn't waste motion. Exceptional athlete. Great leaper. Durable. Had an up-and-down senior year. Seemed to lose some of his quickness and catch-up speed. Didn't tackle or hit that well. Four-year starter who never missed a game. Played both cornerback and free safety in 1983. Looked like a super-duper player as a junior but was inconsistent as a senior.

TOMORIES "MOSSY" CADE (5-11, 175, 4.45-4.6) Texas -- Superb athlete. Fine competitor. Very fluid. Excellent turn-and-go ability. Can run with the sprinters. Will hit. Has all the physical tools you look for in a corner, but shows poor judgement at times. Can be turned around and beaten on moves. Has All-Pro tools but is a bit of a live wire.

VICTOR SCOTT (5-10½, 190, 4.5-4.7) Colorado -- Excellent athlete. Quick, fluid and agile. Can break on the ball. Will hit. Had a disappointing senior year. Loses his concentration and gets beaten. Lets receivers get behind him and doesn't show great catch-up speed. Has started since his freshman year. Has very good ability but is very inconsistent.

RODNEY McSWAIN (6-0, 198, 4.4-4.5) Clemson -- Excellent athlete. Good size. Great speed. Will hit. Very raw. Lacks technique. Inconsistent. Great speed and fine potential but lacks technique and may need a year or two to develop.

CHRIS ROCKINS (5-11, 190, 4.55-4.7) Oklahoma State -- Very good athlete. Bone-jarring hitter. Excellent tackler. Has some cover ability. Durable. May not have quite the speed or cover ability you look for in a corner, but should make it as a corner or strong safety.

TERRY TAYLOR (5-10, 170, 4.4-4.55) Southern Illinois -- Excellent athlete. Quick and fast. Can run with a receiver and shadow him all over the field. Has a knack for blocking kicks. Will hit. Lacks size and strength. Hits but people bounce off him. Should make it as a nickle back and could eventually grow into a starter.

OTHERS: Randy Robbins, Arizona, may end up at safety. **Rodney Bellinger** of Miami (Fla.) wishes his height matched his heart. Furman's **Ernest Gibson** must improve his tackling. **Fred Acorn** of Texas has super speed but lacks technique.

SAFETIES

RUSSELL CARTER (6-1¾, 185, 4.5-4.65) Southern Methodist -- Excellent athlete. Very competitive. Extremely aggressive vs. both the pass and run. Has a nose for the ball. Covers a lot of ground. Mentally tough. Doesn't back down after he gets beaten. Lacks upper-body strength and technique. Overplays the run. May be best-suited for safety due to his height and long stride. A little raw but very talented. A cross between a young Mel Blount and Roland James.

DON ROGERS (6-0½, 207, 4.6-4.75) UCLA -- Excellent athlete. Great competitor. Deluxe hitter. Vicious tackler. Dominates vs. the run. Has good range. Generally goes straight to the ball. Plays best in big games. Field fast. Pure safety. Cannot play the corner. Lacks great stopwatch speed. Overplays the run, and lets receivers get behind him at times. Ken Easley-type player but not quite as big or fast.

JAMES LAWRENCE "BO" EASON (6-1½, 195, 4.5-4.7) California-Davis -- Excellent athlete. Big, fast and fluid. Covers a lot of ground. Has good hands and vision. Will hit. Team leader. Big question is that he hasn't faced top competition, but looks like he has the tools to play in any league.

STACEY TORAN (6-2, 205, 4.55-4.7) Notre Dame -- Big. Fluid and athletic for his size. Good hitter and tackler. Can go high for the interception. Has some man-to-man coverage ability. Lacks the quickness and speed needed to play cornerback in the NFL. A little inconsistent, but looks like a fine SS candidate.

MARK ROBINSON (5-10¾, 201, 4.65-4.8) Penn State -- Very good athlete. Deluxe hitter. Great tackler. Tremendous competitor. Smart. Catches the ball well. Lacks sustained speed. Isn't that tall for safety. Cracked his right fibula in the sixth game of the year vs. Alabama and missed the rest of the season. Run support is his forte, and he'll play safety if his ankle is OK.

HARRY HAMILTON (5-11, 190, 4.6-4.75) Penn State -- Very smart and competitive. Good athlete. Fine open-field tackler. Instinctive. Jumps well. Had an excellent senior year. Lacks speed. Isn't that tall for a safety. Needs work on man-to-man coverage. Smart, tackles well and makes plays.

TONY LILLY (5-11¾, 195, 4.6-4.75) Florida -- Fine athlete. Fluid. Jumps well. Makes some great hits. Can tackle in the open field. Reacts to the ball. Lacks catch-up speed. Inconsistent hitter and competitor. Needs strength but hates to lift weights. Looks great at times, so-so at others.

BARNEY BUSSEY (5-10½, 195, 4.6-4.7) South Carolina State -- Very good athlete. Big-league hitter. Fine tackler. Quick. Has some cover ability. Returns and blocks kicks. Dominated in his league. Lacks true corner's speed. A little short for safety.

MARTIN BAYLESS (6-1½, 205, 4.55-4.7) Bowling Green -- Fine size. Strong tackler. Alert. Has a knack for the interception. Was very productive in college, but needs to improve his footwork. Has trouble on man-to-man coverage. Needs work on coverage but is a strong tackler with a knack for the interception.

OTHERS: Scott Case of Oklahoma is smart, instinctive but small. Pitt's **Tom Flynn** is heady and can return punts. **Dwight Drane**, Oklahoma, is fast and physical. **Terry Hoage** of Georgia has good size and is always around the ball, but has injury problems.

PLACEKICKERS

BRUCE KALLMEYER (5-10, 180) Kansas -- Kicks off. Strong leg. Had good stats. Has kicked in bad weather. Can punt in an emergency. Must learn how to kick without a tee. Inconsistent hang time on kickoffs. Soccer-style kicker. Has a strong leg but lacks consistency.

MIKE THOMAS (5-11½, 180) Angelo State -- Strong leg. Tough in the clutch. Must learn how to kick without a tee and with big linemen rushing him. Barefoot, soccer-style kicker who kicked well in college.

OTHERS: Minnesota's **Jim Gallery** will get a look. **Scott Wedell**, Texas-El Paso, has above-average leg strength.

PUNTERS

JACK WEIL (5-10, 170) Wyoming -- Handles bad snaps well. Above-average leg strength. Gets the ball off quickly. Doesn't have a great leg. Isn't that consistent. Small. Wyoming's altitude helped his average, but has a real chance to make it.

GEORGE REYNOLDS (6-0, 195) Penn State -- Smooth kicking motion. Strong leg. Can boom the ball. Good hang time. Has kicked in bad weather. Somewhat inconsistent. Drops the ball further in front of himself than most kickers, and that can lead to blocks.

OTHERS: Brett Wright of Southeastern Louisiana has a big, strong leg. **Chris Norman**, South Carolina, can really thump it, but lacks consistency.

Here's The Beef . . .

PITTSBURGH Steelers WEEKLY
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Two Holdouts Sign Pacts, Report To Training Camp
A Typical Day in The Life Of A Rookie
Steeler Defense Shuts Down Cowboys
A Tale Of Two Guys Named Washington
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Let's Not Forget Malone

There is a rather popular anecdote concerning Steeler quarterback Mark Malone that, even today, nearly five years after the fact, remains one of the favorite stories of National Football League scouts and personnel people when they gather for the purpose of evaluating meat on the hoof -- and swapping oft-told tales.

It seems that at one of the scouting combine's evaluation sessions -- three day flesh-parades during which the combine's member teams get to size up, literally and figuratively, the top college talent available -- following Malone's senior season at Arizona State, the collected scouts were trotting in each of the 150 or so players present to get exact heights and weights.

When Malone's name was barked, he walked up to the scale wearing little more than a pair of skimpy gym shorts. At 6-4 and almost 225 pounds -- and sculptured like some Greek remnant statue from days gone by -- Malone hardly looked the part of the quarterback. And, the story goes, Malone's teammates, who were also at the NFL session, knew that Mark was more than a little touchy about reports that some NFL teams felt the same way -- that he wasn't a quarterback, but rather an extraordinary athletic specimen who'd someday wind up at tight end or safety or running back.

"Tight end, tight end, tight end," Malone's Sun Devil teammates chanted good-naturedly as Malone stepped up to the scale.

Without so much as a hint of a smile, Malone turned slowly around and eyed his hecklers. "CFL, CFL, CFL," he retorted, the message meant more for the NFL people than for his ASU colleagues.

Malone's hardly-subtle message was very clear. He was a quarterback, and the team that drafted him had better be prepared to deal with him as such.

The Malone story is hardly meant to serve as prophesy. Yet, entering his fifth NFL season, the Steelers' 1980 first-round draft pick is still trying to prove to his critics -- some members of the Steeler coaching staff believed to be among them -- that he can indeed play quarterback in the NFL.

Yet, if the proof be in the pudding, then Mark Malone's dessert dish certainly grew a bit more muddied during the past two months. And, if the proof be in the playing, well, based on Malone's scant two quarter's worth of field duty in 1983, the verdict could be a long one in coming.

That Malone saw action only as a mop-up man in two lopsided Steeler defeats during the past season -- in Detroit and Cleveland -- is a part of Malone's four-year history. But, that Malone would possibly enter St. Vincent's College in July, 1984 as the Steelers' leading candidate to lean in behind center Mike Webster in the fall, seemed more a matter of true promise.

Of course, as Malone well knows, promises are made to be broken. The man who once held the inside track to the starter's position today finds that track blocked not only by the team's acquisition of Miami Dolphin one-time starter David Woodley, but also by recent reports that Terry Bradshaw is throwing lightly and also throwing without pain.

In the wake of what would seem to be disappointing developments, a lesser man might certainly have opted for the facile way out. Malone's contract was entering its option year in 1984. Another year's clipboard service and he'd be free to pursue the sport's ever-broadening option, read that USFL.

The Arizona Wranglers, George Allen's team that plays its games in Malone's old stomping grounds at Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe, were said to be keenly interested, particularly with veteran Greg Landry showing more gray hair than even his legendary coach and Malone's popularity in the area.

Yet, Malone opted for a new contract with the Steelers, one that will bind him to the club through 1985. If the siren call of February 1, 1985 -- the date on which Malone could have become a free man -- had the least bit of lure on the young passer, the spectre of a job yet undone was far more tempting. That and the fact that the Steelers undoubtedly made it worth his while to stick around, the premium for quarterbacks of any talent having spiraled with the presence of the USFL.

Malone, for the record, was hardly surprised when the Steelers acquired Woodley.

"Mark expected the Steelers to get another quarterback," said his agent, Richard Bennett when he announced the new contract. "Obviously, the Steelers weren't going to go into training camp with only one (healthy) quarterback. Everybody agrees that Terry Bradshaw's situation is tenuous."

(continued on page 6)

Woodley desperately w

In Woodley, The Guy T

by Len

At first glance, the Pittsburgh Steelers' late February trade for former Miami Dolphin signal-caller David Woodley -- only the eighth trade during Chuck Noll's 15-year tenure, and the team's first swap for a quarterback since the eminently forgettable Dick Shiner came to the Steelers in 1969 -- might represent the ultimate in ironies.

After all, there were times last season when the ardent Steeler fans, who found themselves growing increasingly disenchanted with the now-departed Cliff Stoudt as the season wore on disastrously, would tune in to an NFL game involving the Dolphins, watch former Pitt star Dan Marino toss a couple of touchdown passes and muse about what might have been, particularly since the Panther record-holder had been available when the Steelers exercised the 21st pick in the NFL draft.

"If only we had the guy in Miami at the controls," they might have thought enviously to themselves.

Well, now the Steelers *do* have a Miami guy in the running for the starting quarterback's job. And, while Woodley might not be exactly the guy the fans had in mind, the Steeler brass has certainly made it abundantly clear that he was the one *they* had in mind when they began exploring the possibilities of trading for a quarterback to assure that they'd enter training camp in July with at least two healthy pitching arms.

Dan Marino might be All-Pro -- in fact, he was the first rookie in the league's history to be selected as the starting quarterback for his conference in the Pro Bowl game, even though he couldn't compete because of knee surgery -- but the Steeler coaches will be happy enough if Woodley succeeds in just becoming All-Pittsburgh.

The Steelers, of course, made the deal with a skeptical eye toward the future of Terry Bradshaw.

"Sure, we're hopeful that Terry will come back. We had him in for our doctors to look at, but you just never know," confided Art Rooney Jr. during a break at a February NFL owners' meeting in Chicago. "If Terry comes back, all the better. Then we'll be just as strong as we were before at the position.

"We couldn't afford to wait until June or July, though, to do something. We had to make sure right now that we had a couple of people who could play the position. We've got confidence in Mark Malone. He's got a lot of ability. But, until we're sure about Terry, Mark was the only healthy quarterback we knew we had."

Rooney, who oversees the Steelers' personnel department, added: "Plus, when you consider what people are asking for quarterbacks now, we got David at a very good price. It wasn't as if we had to disrupt our team or trade away one of our starters. In today's market, quarterbacks are the prized commodity. For what we gave up, well, we think we got a very good quarterback at a price we could afford."

The deal, which was believed to have been initiated in New Orleans at the NFL's three-day evaluation session of college seniors attended by just about all of the league's coaches, cost the Steelers a third-round pick in this May's draft.

There is a second draft choice involved also, and that pick is contingent upon Woodley's playing time over the next two years.

Although the Steelers, as a matter of club policy, refuse to confirm the "other" draft pick, sources indicate that it, too, is a third-round choice. If Woodley participates in more than 50 percent of the offensive plays in '84, the Dolphins will receive another third-rounder to complete the deal. However, if Woodl
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25, a four-year NFL was drafted by the e eighth round of the 1980 collegiate lottery, had fallen from the starting position with the Dolphins -- and from the distinction of having been, just the year before, the youngest quarterback ever to lead his team into a Super Bowl -- to third string, with the emergence of Marino following the fifth game of the 1983 season.

With the Dolphin offense struggling, and the team a game below .500, at 2-3, Woodley was benched in favor of Marino, who grew rather quickly into the job. The former LSU star finished the season behind both Marino and veteran reserve Don Strock, who got the starting nod in the season's final regular-season game when Marino was out with a knee injury.

His contract having expired on February 1, Woodley began studying the alternatives. The quarterback-destitute USFL found his door an easy one to bang on. But, while Woodley listened to their offers, he admits that he instructed agent Howard Slusher, who numbers several key Steeler veterans among his clientele, to explore all the possibilities.

"I'm not trying to kid anyone," says Woodley. "I could have signed at least a month before the trade with the USFL. There were opportunities there, no doubt about it."

One of those opportunities, it was rumored, was proffered by Donald Trump of the New Jersey Generals. And, while Woodley's Steeler contract is a significant one -- original reports place it at $2 million for three years, but subsequent reports indicate it's more in the area of $1.4 million including incentives, still one of the tops, if not the top, on the team -- it probably doesn't rival an offer from the USFL that was said to be about $700,000 per year.

"It was tough to turn down," says Woodley. "But my first thought was to stay in the NFL. I really felt like I'd done some things in the league, and that I just wasn't finished completing the things I wanted to do. I thought I still had some things that I wanted to accomplish here.

"My second thought was to play in Pittsburgh because of the reputation that the Steelers have around the country. Maybe people in Pittsburgh don't realize just how much that Steeler name means outside of Pittsburgh. But there's a tradition here what with the Rooney family and Chuck Noll. They've done great things, they're a great organization, and I felt like I wanted to be a part of that."

So much so, in fact, that Woodley admits he told agent Slusher not to "scare them off."

"Howard can do that, I guess, with some teams," Woodley laughs at the memory of that conversation. "When Coach Shula called me and told me the Steelers were interested, I called Howard and told him to do whatever he had to do to get me a contract. I was anxious to come to Pittsburgh.

"Actually, I guess I've got to give Coach Shula a lot of credit. He told me that he'd talked to Coach Noll and that the Steelers were interested. He told me that, if the Steelers signed me as a free agent, they'd probably have to give up two first-round draft picks, and that they weren't likely to want to do that. That's a pretty steep price. But he said, 'David, if you want to go up there, I'll make a deal. I'll have them call your agent.' I think he made the deal easy enough for the Steelers to swallow, so I have to thank him for that, because he gave me an opportunity."

An opportunity that Woodley had come to believe just didn't exist for him anymore in Miami.

"I never really felt they were totally committed to Marino when

(continued on page 16)

Steelers Always Liked Woodley

While reaction to the acquisition of quarterback David Woodley by Steeler fans has been a bit mixed thus far, there's little doubt that Steeler brass is tickled at being able to bring in a youngster that they consider to have formidable talents. And there are other teams around the league who seem to agree with the Steelers' assessment of the 25-year-old Woodley.

When asked at a one-day NFL owners' meeting in Chicago how he liked the team's newest quarterback, Art Rooney Jr. smiled and replied bluntly, "Well, we hope he's a little bit better than the guy who went to Birmingham.

"Actually," Rooney continued, "we think we got an excellent player, one who'll help us quite a bit. He's had some playing time, been a starter, and when you consider what we got him for (a third-round pick now, and possibly another later), we got a real bargain.

"We were impressed with his athletic ability from the start. He's got that running ability, the knack for getting out of pressure situations. That's a plus, but that's not why we got him. We ran into a problem at times last year with Cliff running a little too much. But it's good to know that your quarterback can help himself once in awhile when he has to."

Woodley himself denied reports that his running had gotten him into some trouble with Dolphin coach Don Shula.

"Not true," he retorted. "As a matter of fact, in Miami, it was always viewed as a plus, I think. They didn't want their quarterbacks running all over the place, either, but it helped to be able to run. Shula never said anything negative about it to me."

Actually, it was his pure athletic abilities that gave Woodley a huge edge over the other available quarterbacks. That, and the fact that the Steelers didn't have to part with a first-round draft pick.

Although Art Rooney Jr. confirmed that there were a couple of other quarterbacks that the Steelers looked at, he didn't go into details, nor did he mention names. But the *Steelers Weekly*, through a reliable source, has learned that the Steelers explored the possibility of acquiring Denver free agent Steve DeBerg, and that they, like most of the rest of the league, were also aware of the availability of New York Jet passer Richard Todd, who was dealt to the New Orleans Saints.

Art Rooney Jr.

Rumors had it that the Steelers were willing to part with either Tom Beasley or John Goodman, a fourth-round pick this year and a future contingency pick for DeBerg, but that the Denver asking price was much too high. And, if the Steelers would have been forced to sign DeBerg as a free agent, they'd surely have had to part with two first-round picks as compensation.

Their interest in Todd was nil, the feeling being that he wasn't quite the athlete Woodley was, and that some of the criticisms against him in the past two years were closer to truth than fiction.

"We did have some people available to us," said Rooney, "but you never want to tear apart what you've been building to get a player in a trade unless you really have to. With David, the price was right.

"I'm not sure how he's going to react, how well he'll play for us. You can never guess on those types of things. But I know he's got the kind of skills we liked. Our coaches were very impressed with him."

So was San Francisco 49er general manager John McVay, who noted, "Woodley will help the Steelers a lot. I guess there were some people down on him, but he's a fine quarterback. He's got a lot more going for him than people give him credit for. He's going to be a good acquisition for the Steelers. I think they made a good trade for themselves.

"I know I'm a Woodley fan. I've watched him progress. He's got good tools. They helped themselves."

Rooney concluded, "The last thing we wanted to have to do was to go into the draft being forced to pick a quarterback early, although we'd thought about it and discussed it. We discussed trying to trade up in the first round, too, to get a quarterback, but we felt there were other alternatives to that."

Len Pasquarelli

Woodley

(continued from page 15)

he first came down there," Woodley says. "But when we weren't going well, they had to do something to get the team going. Marino's a young guy, and he came in and played well almost from the start. And (Don) Strock is the type that can come in when something happens. Strock has always been a good reliever. He's got the right mentality for it, I suppose, so he got the practice time. I found it hard to see myself as a reliever. Maybe it takes time to develop that kind of patience.

"It didn't look like I had much of a future in Miami, though."

Woodley finds himself in an in-between situation with the Steelers, however. He is, as is Mark Malone, living in a football limbo at present, as Bradshaw attempts to come back from elbow surgery that sidelined him for all but one game of the '83 season. At the same time, he could easily find himself in a very enviable position should Bradshaw, sometime this spring, decide that his arm will never fully respond to rehabilitation.

Woodley's totally aware of the various scenarios that could develop.

And, while he concedes that he didn't have the patience to accept a reserve's role in Miami, he contends that sitting behind Bradshaw, if it comes to that, won't be such a terrible fate.

"I'd have no problem with that at all," he says. "I'll be glad to do it if I have to. When you consider the things that Terry's done -- things that might never be done again by a quarterback -- how could I have any problems in learning from him? It would be a great experience."

An experience, he says, that he really never got in Miami.

"It was supposed to be a similar thing for me in Miami when I got there. They had Bob Griese, and, even though he'd had some injuries and played something like 14 seasons, everyone figured he'd still be around for a couple of seasons and that I could watch him and learn from him. But that didn't happen. Griese was hurting and, all of a sudden, I found myself starting as a rookie in the NFL. Nothing could be scarier.

"I guess you could say it was kind of like on-the-job training for me. Griese was good about helping out, but I never really got to watch him play, and I think that would have helped me some.

"Then, it didn't help when Dan Henning, our quarterback coach, left to join the Washington Redskins (Henning has since become head coach of the Atlanta Falcons). It was like I was kind of on my own to learn a lot of the things I had to know."

So, playing behing Bradshaw --who maintains that, if healthy, he'll play until he's 40 years old -- could be a sort of welcome respite for a guy who's been under the gun from the get-go.

Playing behind Malone, however, could be another story, although Woodley tactfully remarks, "That's a decision that the coaches would make, and there's little I'd be able to do about it. I'd accept it, but the coaches are the people who are paid to know what's best for the team. I guess it wouldn't be a problem, because they know more than me about it."

Woodley comes to Pittsburgh with the reputation of being a "team player." Yet, experience-wise, he is far ahead of Malone, who was taken in the first round of a draft in which Woodley wasn't even selected until the eighth go-round. He claims his edge of on-field experience won't influence his feelings for the competition Malone could offer.

"Obviously the Steelers thought a lot of Mark when they drafted him," he acknowledges. "Our situations have just been different. He's had to play behind two pretty good quarterbacks. I walked into a situation -- although I didn't know it at the time -- that was tailor-made for a guy who wanted to play right away.

"I never dreamed I'd be playing in my rookie year, but that's the way it turned out. Mark didn't get that kind of break. I'm sure he's got a lot of talent, and I'm looking forward to meeting him."

Then, just to make sure the record has been set straight, he adds, "I'm a team-oriented player who's come from a team-oriented system. I realize that everyone's got a job to do, and I plan to do mine. If that means I'm the starting quarterback, fine. If I'm not, then I'll do whatever it is the coaches want me to do."

From the way Steeler coaches talk about Woodley's skills, it's more than apparent that he is foremost in their plans.

"David's ability is what interested us purely," Noll said. "We were not looking for a running quarterback, we were looking for someone who can throw the football.

"He's accurate, and he has a good, quick release. His arm strength is definitely superior. I think he's going to be a great addition to our football team."

Added offensive coordinator Tom Moore: "Woodley is an excellent athlete. That was probably the first thing that caught our eye. Then, after you watch him for awhile, you realize just how well he can drive the ball downfield. His arm is very strong, a lot stronger than some people might think.

"We think he can come in and play if that's what has to happen. He's got experience, and, given that there weren't a lot of alternatives, we came out with just a great deal. We're getting a quarterback who's played, and we didn't have to give up an arm and a leg. And we're far better off than if we'd had to draft a quarterback on the first round.

"Plus, Woodley's still young and learning. It's not the kind of situation where he's going to have to start from scratch, but he's in a position where he can continue to grow as an NFL quarterback."

Woodley agrees.

"It's a good situation for me," he allows. "The Steelers are a good team, they had a need, and I think I can help fill that need. Offensively, I don't think there's a great difference between the offenses in Miami and here. I think that's going to help my preparation. I won't have to spend so much time learning as doing."

> *"I'd have no problem with that at all (playing behind Terry Bradshaw). I'll be glad to if I have to. When you consider the things that Terry's done -- things that might never be done again by a quarterback -- how could I have any problems in learning from him? It would be a great experience."*
>
> **-- David Woodley**

Doing, however, means attempting to revitalize an offense that dropped off rapidly in 1983. And, in truth, the offense now resembles the team's defense of just a few years ago: in need of some big-play performers and an infusion of some new blood.

Woodley will do nicely for a start, perhaps, but further changes will also be necessary. Woodley says that, although he's seen the Steelers on film a few times in the past couple of seasons, he's really not all that familiar with the club's offensive personnel.

"I know names, but that's about it," he says. "I know someone (at the press conference) mentioned about the wide receivers and the need there, but, if a quarterback is doing his job, the receivers will catch the football.

"Those things, though, are things I'll have to pick up in camp. It'll be a challenge coming into a new situation and having to adapt and have people adapt to me. When I first went to Miami, they'd played with Griese for so long that it was difficult for some of the players to change, to realize that there were some things I could do that he couldn't and some things certainly that he did and I didn't do nearly as well.

"But that's all part of the change, part of the excitement. That's what makes it a great game, and it's one of the things I'm looking forward to."

He's also looking forward, he says, to meeting Bradshaw, his fellow Shreveport native with whom he's never exchanged pleasantries. Both men should hit it off quickly, since they share an obsession with horses. Woodley has three (soon to be four) thoroughbreds and admits that he "likes the track."

Bradshaw, of course, spends much of his off-season tending to the horses on his farm in Grand Cane, Louisiana.

One thing that Woodley didn't share with Bradshaw, however, was a high school alma mater. While Bradshaw -- and later Buffalo Bill star Joe Ferguson -- played at the now-famous Woodlawn High, Woodley prepped at Byrd High School. Still, Woodley recalls the impact of the Bradshaw name over the town.

"He was the biggest thing in town," says Woodley. "They had Terry Bradshaw Days, and everyone always hoped the Steeler games would be on television so they could watch him play.

"He's one of the greatest, so I'm looking forward to just being able to sit down and talk with him."

It'll take more than talking, however, for Woodley to assume command of the Steelers in the manner that Bradshaw can. He will, he admits, have to continue to hone his physical skills. And, perhaps more importantly, he'll have to come to grips with the realization that, for him, some things came too easily at first.

"That's true," he agrees, "but it's not something that's totally negative. There are plusses and minuses in the way things happened. I got to the Super Bowl in just three years, and maybe I wasn't able to handle some of those things as well as I would have liked.

"Maybe I just expected that type of success to continue, I don't know. I do know, though, that on the positive side, I learned a lot from my experiences. There's nothing I'd change, I don't think. It's all a part of growing with the game. I've been able to turn the negatives into positives. That's what I believe. The things that have happened to me over the past four years have afforded me a lot of moments to think about.

"I plan to use all of it to my advantage. This is an exciting new start, and I want to make the most of it. I could have taken the easier way out probably, but this situation held a lot of appeal for me.

"I'm just happy to be here."

But probably not half as happy as the Steeler coaches are to have him here.

A Taste Of Ailes

Thin Draft Means Steelers Can't Afford Mistakes

BY DAVE AILES

Someone once noted that "a liar is one who has no partition between his imagination and his information."

If that definition holds even one kernel of veracity, then the guys down at the Steeler offices who guard the BLESTO scouting combine reports as if they were a matter of national security, had better erect a partition. Soon.

There are, to be sure, enough lies -- for the sake of the Steeler guys, a good group to be sure, let's just call 'em fibs -- at this time of year to make even Richard Nixon come off as a grand fellow, rather than history's most famous unindicted co-conspirator.

Stories make the rounds about certain college prospects in the weeks leading up to football's only worthwhile off-season endeavor, the draft, and suddenly kids become suspects instead.

Until, of course, the home team, taking the advice of some faceless computer perhaps once too often, nabs 'em. Then they became All-World candidates.

Truth is, the Steelers could use a few formidable bodies this year. Nothing All-World, mind you, just some people who can run and tackle and block. With some modicum of expertise, of course.

For about the third consecutive year now, the punjabs who make a living out of evaluating collegiate football flesh, are tabbing this as a "critical" year for the Steelers. Probably is, too.

There is nary a position on the team, outside of perhaps linebacker or quarterback, where Chuck Noll's squad couldn't use some real men, whether they eat quiche or not.

And, for a change, it would be good for the personnel department to do something they've been threatening to do now for at least the past two drafts: pick some players who've produced in college at the big-time level.

There is a popular school of thought that, when the National Football League pushed back its draft from February to late April or early May, the Steelers were the team hardest hit by the transition. There may be some truth to that, but, if you can get all the homework done by two weeks after the conclusion of the Super Bowl, sometimes in years when you were playing in the Super Bowl -- and do it with the "edge" that everyone now suspects is absent -- then why can't you do it even better by April or May?

In one man's humble opinion, the Steelers' biggest weakness has been in trying to be a little too perfect. And, in so doing, they've built up around themselves a kind of false smugness.

The team is now just coming around to the realization that the "old way" of winning football games, the things that made the Steelers Super Bowl champions four times, just might not be the right way of doing things anymore. The same kind of realization is overdue when it comes to the matter of Draft Day.

In recent years, the Steelers have paid lip service to the thought of drafting the players who've produced at the Michigans, Penn States, Pitts and Ohio States of the world, rather than reaching for some unknown from San Luis Obispo AM&N.

But, fact is, everytime the draft rolls around, the Steelers find it too tempting to take people like the long-lamented Isaac "Bo Scott" Metcalf, last year's fourth-round pick from Baylor, a safety who packed about as much wallop as you'd expect to encounter had you done battle with a bag of marshmallows.

Bo Scott probably wasn't as good a football player as Bo Derek would have been. Or Bo Belinsky. Or, for that matter, the ol' double-Bo, Bobo Brazil.

But there were the Steeler personnel folks, impressed by the fact that Metcalf could run the forty in something like four-dot-four. Forget the fact that the guy covered enemy receivers somewhat like Joan Collins' gowns cover her, uh, natural endowments, and that most of Metcalf's forty-yard dashes would have been spent in hot pursuit of some tight end who'd just laid a fake on him over the middle.

The old "edge" the Steelers used to have? Well, somewhere along the line the Steelers discovered that Metcalf needed glasses. Didn't matter that he couldn't have shattered a pane of window glass with a forearm shiver. Didn't matter either that he'd only intercepted two passes in his college career. Most guys step in front of that many balls if by nothing more than accident. Or divine intervention.

After a few weeks in training camp, the Steelers sent Metcalf to the safety-thin Washington Redskins, upon whom they had earlier inflicted Anthony Washington, one of the league's top third-degree burn men. At least the Steelers recouped a fourth-round pick in next month's draft for Washington. They got nothing for Metcalf, a dreary waste of a fourth-round pick.

In this year's draft, in a player pool loaded with question marks, the Steelers can ill afford mistakes of that type.

They can't completely throw physical numbers out the window, but it would help some if they could look at a guy's college production, too, before deciding whether or not he can indeed play the game.

The days of getting the computer-perfect player have long since disappeared from the scene. Other teams are getting rich picking guys the Steelers have bypassed.

Which isn't to say that the Steelers aren't a team with young, rising contributors. To the contrary, there is an excellent nucleus of future players who might not be stars but who will make a difference.

Unfortunately, the transfusion has to continue.

On May 1, the Steelers make another visit to pro football's blood bank. They'd better come away with a few more quality pints.

Steelers Weekly columnist Dave Ailes is sports editor of the Greensburg Tribune-Review. His column is a regular feature.

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Dungy Is Enthused About His New Role

BY LEN PASQUARELLI

In truth, Tony Dungy is probably more widely known by most football fans outside the general environs of Pittsburgh and the Tri-State Area as the answer -- or at least *one* of the answers -- to one of the sport's greatest all-time trivia questions.

Dungy, you might recall if you're a Steeler fan of any longevity, is one of the very few people in the history of the National Football League to have completed that rarest -- and, in a sense, that most dubious -- of doubles: having intercepted a pass and also having thrown an interception, both in the same game.

That Dungy could possibly have found himself in the predicament of playing both quarterback and safety in that long-since-forgotten 27-10 Steeler loss to the Houston Oilers in 1977, was more attributable to the team's misfortune and injury situation than to Dungy's own athletic prowess. Which is not to infer that Dungy, whose NFL career lasted but a brief three years, was totally bereft of football talent. The former Minnesota Golden Gopher signal-caller enjoyed a distinguished Big Ten career and still lays claim to second place in many of the school's total offense categories.

But, when both Terry Bradshaw and his caddie Mike Kruczek, went to the bench with injuries in the Astrodome on that fateful October afternoon in 1977, Chuck Noll looked up and down the bench for a stop-gap, and, with the cupboard nearly bare, his gaze finally stopped when it fell upon Dungy, the one remaining morsel of quarterback talent.

Dungy's latest situation should be a lot less perilous than having to face the likes of a then-ravaging Oiler defensive front. In a move that was viewed as surprising only outside the Steelers' Three Rivers Stadium offices, Noll once again summoned Dungy for a critical position: that of replacing longtime aide and defensive whiz Woody Widenhofer as the team's defensive coordinator.

This time, however, Dungy will get more than one lone quarter in which to display his expertise.

He follows two fellows -- George Perles and Widenhofer -- who achieved near-tenure at the position. And, while no one's taking anything for granted, Dungy's maiden season in 1984 could well mark the beginning of a very long career near the top of the heap of NFL coaches.

He brings to the job no small amount of enthusiasm.

"I'm really excited about the whole thing," beamed Dungy, who really made no formal application for the position other than to mention to Noll that he'd certainly be interested in taking over a unit that last year ranked third overall in the NFL. "I think I can do some new things and, at the same time, continue some of the things we've been doing for awhile. It's a challenge, no doubt about it, but it was a challenge that I was really hoping for.

"I honestly think I was the best man for the job. I know the defense better than anyone else, and I'd worked hard with Woody over the past two seasons. I had a pretty good concept of what we were trying to do defensively, what we were attempting to accomplish."

Although the Steeler brass would never concede the names of some of the other candidates they talked to -- there were rumors that former Oiler head coach Ed Biles and former Green Bay Packer defensive coordinator John Meyer were active applicants -- Tony Dungy didn't really concern himself about credentials that included but three years of formal coaching experience.

"I knew Chuck had to talk to some other people," Dungy relates. "You have to in a situation like that. But I also think he knew how interested I was and how badly I wanted that job.

"It's always been the type of organization that's promoted from within. When George (Perles) left, Woody got the job, and he was the most qualified man for it, no question. When Woody left, I thought it was my time to step forward and let my feelings be known."

Obviously, Noll agreed with Dungy's self-assessment.

In the Steeler tradition, there was little fanfare involved in the announcement. Remember, this is a team whose president got the job when his father strolled into Public Relations Director Joe Gordon's office and told him to change the titles in the team's media guide.

The entrusting to Dungy of a defense that was, at times, brilliant during the early portions of the '83 schedule marked the culmination of a rise that could only be labeled meteoric.

Dungy came to the Steelers, of course, as a free agent in 1977, and proceeded to outplay veteran safeties Ray Oldham and Glen Edwards in training camp, earning himself the team's nickel back spot. And, if his career wasn't particularly lengthy -- just three seasons -- it was notable for its productivity. In 1978, a season in which he started only two games, Dungy led the Steelers in interceptions with six.

Those were, as far as his on-field career was concerned, his halcyon days. But, just as the poem relates, those days were never quite revisited.

The following season, in training camp, Dungy was victim to the numbers game, and was traded to the San Francisco 49ers for a 10th-round draft choice. That pick turned out to be Woodrow Wilson, a defensive back of some talent, who now labors in the USFL. Dungy's career, on the other hand, has turned much more presidential, even if his active days ended just a year after the Steelers traded him.

From the 49ers, Dungy went to the New York Giants, where he was released. The end of his playing career, however, simply served as a springboard for a career that lots of folks had predicted for Tony, even as early as his collegiate days at Minnesota.

"He was a student of the game even then," recalled former Minnesota head coach Cal Stoll. "He had a lot of athletic talent, but you could see that he was, sooner or later, going to use his knowledge of the game more than anything else."

It was fitting that Dungy, upon his release from the NFL, quickly captured an assistant-coaching job at his alma mater, tutoring Minnesota's defensive backs.

It was also fitting that, when Dungy began exploring the likelihood of a job within the NFL, the Steelers would be the organization to welcome him.

Actually, at the time of his hiring in 1981, there was some thought that Chuck Noll was bringing him on as a "future" project. Truth is, had Noll not brought him aboard, Dungy might well have ended up with the New York Giants, another organization which, although it had cut him as a player, recognized his knowledge and also recognized that that knowledge could be well-channelled as an assistant coach.

Noll's decision to hire Dungy, however, was hardly surprising. The Steeler boss had admired Dungy's cerebral approach to the game while Dungy was still playing in Pittsburgh, and he also recognized that, if he didn't bring him in then, someone else would soon benefit from Tony's expertise.

Starting as a "defensive assistant," a title construed by many to translate into "assistant coach trainee," Dungy spent his first season assisting secondary coach Dick Walker with devising schemes and also aided Widenhofer in breaking down films.

A year later, when Walker "resigned," Dungy was elevated to full-time secondary coach. Another year later, he finds himself assuming full command of the defense at a critical time in the unit's seeming revival to a return to past glories.

Dungy makes no attempt to conceal his enthusiasm. He also makes no apologies for having achieved his lofty status in a mere three years, while some NFL assistants of far longer tenure would nearly kill for the position he's got.

"Chuck doesn't worry about things like age," he says. "Look at the people he's brought in to coach in the past. He wants people with ideas, people who can teach those ideas.

"He brought Woody in with no pro experience at all, and, when Woody left here, he was one of the tops in his field. He brought in George Perles with no experience at all, and he put him in charge of the greatest front four ever to play the game.

"I think I'm well-prepared. I think I've got good, solid ideas on what I want to do. And, luckily, Chuck is the type of coach who'll trust in me and let me implement the things I think will work for us.

"You never saw Chuck looking over George's or Woody's shoulder. He put them in charge because he believed they were the best people. I think he entrusted me with this job because he felt, after looking at everything, that I was the best person, too."

Dungy's contentions all certainly ring true. He also modestly fails to mention that he may have yet another edge over his predecessors in that

neither of them ever played in the NFL.

Still, his own three years in the NFL, Tony contends, may have little to do with his ideas on how the Steelers should approach defensive play in the '80s. He subscribes, in a roundabout way, to the old baseball theory that the best coaches and managers usually come from the players who spent most of their time on the bench, watching, ruminating, storing away knowledge.

"To an extent, that helped me," he confesses. "But I think I was helped more by being around people who were willing to help me. People like Mel Blount and Donnie Shell were pretty good people to learn from. You can't get much better than that, can you?"

Not unless you can number people like Noll and Widenhofer among the people who've done the most to help form your career. Dungy holds both in the highest esteem.

"Woody has really been a big influence on me," he says. "He was the kind of coach who solicited opinions from the other assistants and took everything into consideration before making decisions.

"Even when I first came back as a coach, Woody was asking my opinions on things. He wanted the assistants totally involved in formulating the game plans. He looked for proposals from all of us."

Noll, Dungy says, "allows the coaches to grow. At the same time, somehow, the theories all seem to come from him. The ideas seem to be an extension of Chuck, but nobody's forced them on you. They happen naturally."

Steeler fans can expect a continuation of that phenomenon under Dungy, who readily admits, "My theories come from Chuck. I've learned more from him than anyone else, as a player and as a coach."

Yet, while Dungy has a definite Steeler pedigree about him -- the affectations of Blount, Shell, Widenhofer and Noll could never be discounted -- his approach to the task at hand is to be distinctly Tony Dungy.

"I got the job because of my ideas, not because I said whatever it was that someone wanted to hear," he says. "I got the job because my ideas were my ideas, not because I was just parroting the ideas of the past.

"There are so many ideas from other people like Woody that will stick with me, that it'd be tough to start talking about all of them specifically. But, at the same time, I'm not going to find myself thinking, 'Gee, I wonder what Woody would have done in a situation like this one.' That would be crazy. I've got more confidence in myself than that."

Steeler fans, however, won't have to sit on the edge of their seats, wondering whether or not radical changes will be the order of the day under Dungy. The transition, he assures, will be a smooth, orderly one.

"I don't think the people are going to notice much difference at all," Tony says. "Actually, there's not going to be a great deal of difference. I think the biggest thing that I'll do is to cut down on the complexity of the defenses we play. I'm a big believer in being able to do a few things and do them well. I'd rather have six or seven basic defenses where everyone knows exactly what he's supposed to be doing as opposed to a lot of defenses where there's some question in people's minds. I'm going to try to eliminate some of that doubt. We'll be a little more basic than we were last year. We'll make some adjustments in the secondary so that there's never a question about what type of coverage we're in."

Dungy's own area of personal concern will remain the defensive backfield -- "I really made it clear to Chuck that I wanted to stick with the secondary," he says -- but he'll lend guidance and direction in all phases of defensive play for his young coaching staff which includes three aides, two of whom have even less experience in the pros than he does.

In that respect, he'll operate much the same way Widenhofer did.

"I'll seek everyone out on things," he says. "It's not going to be 'Tony Dungy's defense.' I don't ever want that to happen.

"I think we've got a very good staff. It's one I feel comfortable with."

As for the structure of the defense itself and the people playing it, Dungy remains confident. There are, he assesses, plenty of good athletes on a unit that dominated opponents early last season. And, he assures, he'll continue the policy of playing as many of those good people as he can.

"I agreed with the way Woody was substituting," he says. "We had lots of people who could play, and we tried to play them.

"I feel like you can play a whole lot better when you're fresh. That's hardly a revelation. But, beyond that, I think you get more out of people when they know they're going to contribute. Most of our defensive players went into games knowing they were going to play some role in that game. It really helps your preparation. You don't find many people not paying attention. Everybody's got an important part.

"We're a team that has a lot of good, young, developing people, and they have got to play to continue that development. I don't think you're going to see us bringing in people to have them sit around for two or three years learning the system. If people can play, we'll find a way to play them. We'll get lots of people into games. No one will sit around getting stale."

Getting stale, however, was the major indictment leveled at the team's defense last year over the second half of the season. It was, to most witnesses, a defense that played

(continued on page 21)

Black Coordinator

Dungy Hiring Breaks New Ground In NFL

Tony Dungy is hardly the kind of guy to wear his blackness on his sleeve.

So, while the Steelers' new defensive coordinator fairly exudes pride at what he's been able to achieve during his brief professional coaching career, he also tends to downplay the fact that, in his present role, he now stands as the NFL's highest-ranking black coach.

"Sure, it's real, it's there," Dungy says of the fact that he is the NFL's lone black coordinator. "But I'd hope that things would go well and go naturally so that it doesn't become a big issue.

"I don't see myself as a pioneer. I'm not the kind of guy who wants to make an issue of it. I suppose I have some pride about it, but I'm more proud of the fact that I impressed Chuck Noll enough to get this job in the first place. I'm proud of the fact that I've been given the job of keeping a good, improving defense on track. I'm proud that a coach the stature of Chuck Noll has got the kind of confidence in me to let me take control."

Yet, while he's somewhat reluctant to become a standard-bearer, and, while it's doubtful he'll ever be the one to bring up the point, Tony Dungy realizes the significance of the ground upon which he now treads.

"If it opens up some doors to others, that's fine," he allows. "But I want to be judged on what I do with our defense, the kind of progress I make as a coach, not as a black coach."

In that sense, Dungy is not unlike former Tampa Bay quarterback Doug Williams, who wanted someday to be the best quarterback in professional football, as opposed to the best *black* quarterback in the game.

"Yes," Dungy agrees, "it's a similar thing, I suppose. Let's just say there are more people out there who'll want to make a bigger thing of it than I will. If my doing well opens up some more opportunities, that's good. But I'm not sure it will just on its own.

"You look at the assistant coaches in the league, and I think one thing is pretty clear: Assistants get jobs because they know someone. I'm no different certainly. I like to think I got the job because Chuck figured I knew the game, or that I'd be willing to work to learn more about the game. But the truth of the matter is, I got my foot in the door because I knew the Steelers and the Steelers knew me.

"Coaches hire assistants that they'll feel comfortable with, guys they know. Look at the Raiders and the three black assistants they've got (Art Shell, Terry Robiskie and Willie Brown). They're all former Raider players, people the organization knew. That's the way it goes."

Dungy does, though, figure that "the way it goes" will lead to more and more blacks finding work on NFL staffs and in the upper echelon of NFL front offices. And, if the "buddy system" proves to be the major vehicle, so be it.

"It'll be a natural progression, I figure," he says. "I think there are a lot more black players interested in getting into coaching, and, if they make that known and they're qualified for the positions, I think you'll see an increase. It's been that way outside of football, and I think it will be that same way inside the game, too."

Still, of course, the ultimate -- a black head coach in the NFL -- looks to be at least a few more years off. But former Cleveland Brown and Washington Redskin star Bobby Mitchell, now an assistant general manager with the Redskins and for long one of the leagues' harshest critics of the lack of blacks in key positions, thinks the time is growing closer.

"We're still a society that's conditioned to certain things, but I'm convinced -- and you're talking to one of the biggest critics -- that we're not too far away now," he says.

For Tony Dungy, whom some now see as *the* prime candidate, it is, again, a day that will have to come naturally. For now, his own aspirations lie in simpler areas.

"I am going to be judged for the job I do for the Pittsburgh Steelers," he says. "I don't have any doubts that, at some point, if our defense isn't performing as well as it did under George or Woody, people may point out something about my age or the fact that I'm black. I'm not naive enough to believe that those factors will never be brought up, because they will, sooner or later.

"First and foremost, however, I'm a coach. I'm an extension of what I've been taught and the ideas and concepts I've developed. You always hope that you're successful enough to go on to higher things. Right now, though, I'm not letting myself look past the job I've got to do here and now."

For Tony Dungy, however, it's been a rapid ascent from that zany day in the Astrodome when he performed one of football's more forgettable feats. Few, it seems, will be surprised if he rises above the crowd to perform far greater feats -- perhaps, someday, as the ultimate pioneer.

Len Pasquarelli

BLITZ

Although new Steeler defensive coordinator Tony Dungy (see page 18) has served notice that there'll be few discernible changes in the Steeler defense in 1984, he does admit that he hopes to get more early-down mileage out of the team's two defensive end/sack experts, Keith Gary and Keith Willis.

In essence, Dungy is throwing down the challenge to the pair of pass-rushers: improve against the run and you'll have a legitimate chance for a starting job.

But, says Dungy, while some of the shortcomings of Willis and Gary against the run are very real indeed, he places some of the blame on the shoulders of the team's coaches themselves.

"I just think we got into a thing where maybe we stressed the pass-rush too much to them," he says. "I think when we went back and looked at the films of the defense, we found out that neither of those guys lacked technique that would enable them to play the run effectively.

"It was like we drilled them into playing only the pass, though. It was a kind of mind-set that we got them into and we're responsible for some of it. We had them thinking pass and they went into games thinking pass. They didn't ignore the run, they just didn't play it nearly as hard, that's all."

Dungy says he'll stress all-around play to both Willis and Gary, and that, if they respond, they'll see more playing time against the run.

"They're both excellent athletes and they have the kind of quickness that can help us against the run," says Dungy. "It's going to be our job in camp to make sure that they're aware of the run and of their responsibilities. It's not as if they don't have the skill to be very effective playing on all downs for us."

* * *

One other change that is still in the works for the Steeler defense involved the move of linebacker Robin Cole to an inside position next to Jack Lambert.

Although the move looked to be a sure thing under Woody Widenhofer, there is still a chance that it might not happen, says Dungy. However, odds are that, with Cole all in favor of the change, it will become a part of the usual early-camp experimentation.

"Naturally, our decision might be affected by what Loren Toews decides to do," says Dungy. Toews, of course, had been contemplating retirement, but had also admitted that, the longer he went without announcing his retirement, the more likely it was that he'd be back. One hint that Toews will probably return is that he is mentioned in the team's 1984 prospectus, recently mailed to media members.

"We think Robin has the kind of strength to help us inside," Dungy says, "but we've got to make sure of several things."

Among those things will be the effectiveness of Bryan Hinkle, who'd be the front-runner to replace Cole as the right outside linebacker, the recovery of 1983 third-round pick Todd Seabaugh, and whether or not the Steelers draft any linebackers.

"Right now," Dungy says, "we're looking at all the possibilities. Robin could really be an effective inside blitzer and he'd give us a little more size inside than we've got now. But nothing's been totally decided yet. We'll kind of see what happens and make a decision as we get closer to training camp."

* * *

While on the subject of Cole, his name came up prominently when the Steelers were putting together the David Woodley trade with the Miami Dolphins.

It seems that Dolphin coach Don Shula is showing concern over his linebacking situation, what with the knee and shoulder injuries to A.J. Duhe.

But when Shula mentioned Cole's name as a possibility in the deal, the Steelers balked.

It was the second time, in fact, that Shula had attempted to acquire Cole from the Steelers. We reported during the '83 season that, up until the trading deadline, the Steelers and Dolphins discussed a trade that would have brought wide receiver Duriel Harris to Pittsburgh. Shula also mentioned the possibility of getting Cole at that time.

There's little doubt that a linebacker of Cole's credentials is a valued commodity. There's also little doubt that the Steelers, who signed Cole to a new pact last year, would have to get an unbelievable offer to trade him.

* * *

Steeler fans will be paying more to see the local heroes next year.

The club announced that it is raising the price of 48,000 tickets from $13 to $15 or from $20 to $22. The price of 3,300 other seats in Three Rivers Stadium will remain at $5.

In addition, the Three Rivers Stadium Authority announced approved price hikes on 16 concession items sold at the stadium.

* * *

Willis (93) and Gary will be given every opportunity by defensive coordinator Tony Dungy to prove they can do the job against the run.

Former Steeler defensive coordinator Woody Widenhofer, now the head coach of the Oklahoma Outlaws of the USFL, is being lauded for the excellent job he's doing with the expansion team.

As we went to press, the Outlaws claimed a 5-2 record, including a big win over the USFL's defending champion Michigan Panthers. Widenhofer called the win over Michigan "the most important victory for our franchise," the second week in a row he had used that term.

"I don't know where people thought we'd finish," said Woody recently. "But we've got people who want to play and they're getting after the opposition."

Actually, Widenhofer's maiden squad was thought to be heavily weighted toward the offensive side, featuring former Tampa Bay Bucs quarterback Doug Williams. But, in the true tradition of Widenhofer defense, the Outlaw stop unit has been a pleasant surprise.

"We don't have a lot of players who the people have heard of," he says, "but we're playing hard and chasing the ball, and when you do that, things tend to happen. I really like what we've done so far."

Widenhofer also took time to lend support to his successor, Tony Dungy.

"Tony was definitely the right man for the job," said Woody. "He has a great background in the Steeler defense and he understands everything we were trying to do. I know he'll do well, because he works hard at it and he's got just an excellent mind for defensive football."

Widenhofer, always the frankest of coaches, a rarity at times in the NFL, took a shot at Arizona Wrangler head coach George Allen recently, after the Outlaws had downed Allen's team.

"They're an excellent football team," said Widenhofer. "If they had some coaching, they'd probably be undefeated."

Yep, Woody might have left the NFL, but some of those NFL-grown feelings are hard to get rid of.

* * *

Former Steeler running back Rocky Bleier will keynote the 1984 annual meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, Thursday morning, May 3 in Washington, D.C.

The meeting, which takes place in the Washington Hilton Hotel, brings together between 4,000-5,000 employers, labor leaders, disabled

persons, rehabilitation and placement specialists and others to exchange ideas, viewpoints and to learn about new developments. Attendees come from all states and many foreign nations.

When he's not busy with his duties as sports anchor for Pittsburgh's NBC affiliate, WPXI, Bleier works with disabled veterans through the Veterans Administration. He is Honorary Chairman of the Special Olympics and is active with a number of other organizations of and for disabled persons.

* * *

Steeler placekicker Gary Anderson finished second to former Steeler Matt Bahr of the Cleveland Browns for field-goal accuracy among AFC kickers.

Anderson, in only his second season with the Steelers, finished with 27 field goals in 31 attempts for an .871 accuracy mark. Bahr's conference-leading mark was .875.

According to NFL statistics, Anderson's average field goal attempt came from 33.4 yards. His average field goal was from 32.8 yards, and his average miss came from 37.3 yards.

Anderson's second-place finish among AFC kickers was also good for second-place among all NFL kickers.

* * *

Several Steelers are drawing notice from the USFL, according to recent reports.

Akron-based agent Greg Lustig acknowledges that at least four of his Steeler clients who'll be entering their option years in 1984, have been approached by the second-year league.

Those players include guard Steve Courson, cornerback Dwayne Woodruff, quarterback Terry Bradshaw and tight end Bennie Cunningham.

Lustig allowed that his first priority is to keep his clients with the Steelers, assuming, of course, that the financial considerations are in line. He is seeking to at least double the salaries of the four players.

"If I can get the money I'm looking for from the NFL," Lustig said, "we're going to re-sign with the NFL."

Woodruff, who has been offered a guaranteed contract by an unnamed USFL club, recently noted of the league, "It's definitely an option. Basically, what I'd like to do is stay in Pittsburgh. This is where I want to be."

Courson, who had signed a contract with the Houston Gamblers last year, only to have the pact voided when it was learned that he still had an option year remaining with the Steelers, is still being pursued by the Gamblers. But at least two other clubs have now joined the hunt.

Lustig admitted that the Gamblers had an offer on the table "that is agreeable to us already. We first have to get the Steelers to make a decision whether they are willing to pay that amount of money. There has been progress in the last meeting regarding Courson. Ultimately, Steve is going to have to make a decision about whether or not he wants to stay or leave."

Lustig said that he would, in all likelihood, not expect his clients to make contract decisions at least until after the NFL draft. He also said he has urged his clients not to sign with a USFL team until their contractual obligations with the Steelers are fulfilled.

"Our policy has been not to sign premature contracts," he said. "I don't believe players can serve two masters."

* * *

John Meyer, counted upon by the Steelers to add depth to the thin offensive tackle position, looks like he's a candidate for yet a third season on the injured reserve list.

Meyer, who had been rehabilitating from knee surgery and looking forward to the upcoming season, recently underwent another knee operation to repair stretched ligaments on the outside of his knee.

Apparently, Meyer felt some pain in the knee when he was running and, upon inspection by his surgeon, the damage was discovered.

Meyer's future can only be described as extremely cloudy at this time (for more on John Meyer, see "The Editor's Desk," page 2 of this issue).

* * *

We've never been big on plugging anything that's going to cost our readers money, but there are two football camps coming up that we just can't resist pointing out to you because of the quality environment they both offer.

Jack Lambert's annual camp, for boys aged 8-18, convenes June 17 at Mt. Union College in Alliance, Ohio, and runs through June 22.

Lambert's camp is recognized as one of the best in the country and yearly features top NFL and college stars. Among the folks lined up for this year's session are: Steve Courson, Gary Dunn, Robin Cole, Dwayne Woodruff, and, of course, Jack Lambert himself.

Tuition is $245 and details are available by calling 216-867-2031, or by writing to Lustig Pro Sports, 3057 West Market Street, Akron, Ohio 44313.

Also, the fifth annual Athletes in Action Football Camp is accepting applications. The camp is held from June 12-16 at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pa.

Described as "a new concept in camps," the AIA camp "focuses on the development of the student athlete in all areas -- athletically, emotionally, scholastically, spiritually."

Featured instructors will include Jon Kolb, Steeler defensive line coach and camp director, John Stallworth, Donnie Shell, Craig Wolfley, Ted Petersen, Tunch Ilkin, Blake Wingle, Dwayne Woodruff, Paul Skansi, Craig Colquitt, and college stars from Pitt, Penn State, Ohio State, West Virginia and Geneva.

Information is available by writing to Athletes in Action, 2023 Clearfork Road, Bridgeville, Pa. 15137, or by calling 412-221-8427.

STEELER '84 SCHEDULE RELEASED

Talk about beating the deadline! Just hours before we went to press with this issue, the NFL released the 1984 schedule. Following is the Steeler card, including pre-season contests. The Steeler schedule features three prime-time games, two on Monday nights and one Thursday night contest in the season's second week.

PRE-SEASON

Aug. 4 -- at Cleveland
11 -- Philadelphia
18 -- at Dallas
25 -- at New York Giants

REGULAR SEASON

Sept. 2 -- Kansas City
6 -- at New York Jets (Thursday)
16 -- L.A. Rams
23 -- at Cleveland
Oct. 1 -- Cincinnati (Monday)
7 -- Miami
14 -- at San Francisco
21 -- at Indianapolis
28 -- Atlanta
Nov. 4 -- Houston
11 -- at Cincinnati
19 -- at New Orleans (Monday)
25 -- San Diego
Dec. 2 -- at Houston
9 -- Cleveland
16 -- at L.A. Raiders

Highlight Film Ready

"The Right Stuff," the 1983 highlight film of the Pittsburgh Steelers, is now available for group and private showings.

The 26-minute film outlines the club's first AFC Central championship since 1979, a season sparked by one of the NFL's top-ranked defenses and the addition of 25 players with three or less years of experience. It opens and closes with recently retired Steeler all-time great Mel Blount, and highlights the special bond which exists between the City of Pittsburgh and the team. In between, there is a review of a very promising season, which ended in a disappointing playoff loss to the Los Angeles Raiders, and a glimpse into the future.

Produced by Pittsburgh native Bob Angelo of NFL Films and narrated by John Facenda, "The Right Stuff" is sponsored by Pittsburgh National Bank for the ninth straight year.

The film is available through Clem Williams Films, 2240 Noblestown Road, Pittsburgh, Pa., 15205. The telephone number is (412) 921-5810.

Beginning about May 1, "The Right Stuff" will be featured in Cinemette movie theaters throughout western Pennsylvania.

Dungy Enthused About His New Steeler Role

(continued from page 19)

tired.

Dungy doesn't agree.

"I just think we stopped being reckless," he opines. "That, plus the other teams stopped playing the pass against us. We fell behind in games and no one had to play catch-up, so they just ran the ball. But we can't blame the offense for everything, like some of the people want to. We didn't get after people the same way we did earlier. We stopped creating the turnovers. If people aren't throwing the ball, you can still knock some fumbles loose. The potential for a turnover might not be as great, but that shouldn't stop you from trying to turn the ball over for your offense.

"I think we can be a lot more aggressive than we were. We played too tentatively at times. We let teams push us around, and that's not the Steeler style. We'll attack people this year, just like we did during that big streak last year."

And, if the results prove as spectacular as they did early in 1983, Tony Dungy will be lionized in a town that relishes head-knockin' defense. If the results prove ineffective?

"Oh, I know I'm going to be under the microscope for a time," Dungy acknowledges. "If we don't do well, I expect that I'll take some heat. I guess even Chuck could get some heat, because people are bound to bring up the age and experience things.

"But I'm ready for all of that. I hope it isn't a factor. I hope we play well enough that no one even has to think about the fact that we've got a new defensive coordinator.

"There's some pressure to succeed, but, if I didn't think I could do this job, I wouldn't have wanted it so badly."

Steeler Scrapbook

Dawson Was An Idle Steeler

BY GEORGE CASTLE

When you think of Len Dawson, you don't think of his frustrating early years as a Pittsburgh Steeler, when he started just one game in three seasons despite being a No. 1 draft choice.

And, when you think of Dawson as an all-time pro quarterback, you don't think of his trailblazing effort into sportscasting while still in the prime of his football career.

But, whatever you think of Dawson -- one of the list of great quarterbacks the Steelers let get away during the team's Dark Ages -- view him as a guy who gives thought to a more successful tomorrow.

Go back to 1959 Pittsburgh, and you'll see an athlete who considered the potential of a TV career before it was fashionable for athletes. Go to 1984 Kansas City, and you'll see a diversifying businessman who hopes to put an original oil painting in every U.S. home.

Above all, when you examine the Len Dawson Story, you see the overriding theme of a few years of loss turning into a lifetime of gain. This year will mark his 18th in sports broadcasting. And, with other business interests, it's not that easy to catch up to him.

But, once you sit him down for a spare moment or two at home, it's fascinating listening.

"I actually had thoughts of a broadcasting career while I was with the Steelers," said Dawson, who co-hosts the weekly *"Inside the NFL"* program with ex-Dolphin linebacker Nick Buoniconti during the season on Home Box Office, the nationwide cable TV channel.

Dawson has expanded his fame acquired during his Kansas City Chief days, through nine years as a sportscaster on KMBC-TV and KMBZ-Radio in K.C., then six more years as a color analyst on NBC's NFL telecasts. The network did not renew his contract for the 1983 season, but Dawson has a reasonable shot at another network gig. After all, he's a big name in sports TV --a situation that didn't seem likely to develop 25 years ago.

"They told me then that you had to go to broadcasting school to get into the business," he said. "But I saw the potential then. TV's coverage of football really started to get big after that famous Colt-Giant overtime championship game in 1958."

Dawson spent a lot of time watching games then -- both in person and on TV. He had the misfortune of being a rookie in 1957 on a team coached by Buddy Parker, an early-day George Allen, who believed in the sanctity of the veteran player.

The Massilon, Ohio, native and Purdue alum had been a much-coveted No. 1 pick in the '57 draft. Both the Steelers and Browns dearly coveted his draft rights. Cleveland coach Paul Brown even was prepared to take Dawson over another Brown, a fellow from Syracuse named Jim Brown. The teams had to flip a coin to get a shot at Dawson. Pittsburgh won, and Cleveland ended up triumphant. But Dawson soon lost.

Despite being a No. 1 draft choice, Len Dawson started just one game in three seasons with the Steelers.

"I was drafted by Walt Keisling's coaching staff," he recalled. "But then he had health problems, and Buddy Parker came over from Detroit. He had a history of not going with rookies. The quarterbacks when I started were Ted Marchibroda and Jack Scarbath. Parker traded them and acquired Earl Morrall from San Francisco and Jack Kemp from Detroit.

"Then, after the second game of the 1958 season, Parker traded Morrall back to Detroit for Bobby Layne," he added. "I was with Pittsburgh for three seasons. I started only one game --against Philadelphia when they told me at the last moment I'd start -- and never played two games in a row. The second-string quarterbacks then weren't really involved in pre-game practices and preparations. And the starters rarely came out of a game unless they were injured so badly they had a bone showing."

But, at least, Dawson was well-paid -- at the time -- for his idleness. Steeler owner Art Rooney signed him for $12,000 a year with a $2,000 bonus, making him one of the highest-paid players on the team.

"Mr. Rooney was a very gracious man," Dawson recalled. "He sent me a note congratulating me after the 1962 AFL title game, when I was with the Dallas Texans. And he sent me another note after the Chiefs won the Super Bowl in 1970."

Dawson made his home in Pittsburgh during the off-season but soon was on the move. The Steelers traded him to Cleveland after the '59 season, but Paul Brown's ardor for Dawson's athletic talents did not translate into playing time. He started only one game for the Browns in two seasons, when the famous Milt Plum was injured.

After asking for -- and receiving -- his release from Cleveland, Dawson joined Hank Stram's Dallas team in the then-three-year-old AFL. Stram had been a Purdue assistant coach who had recruited Dawson out of high school, and thus welcomed his old prodigy back.

"At first, I was awful -- really rusty," said Dawson. "But, I went on to become the AFL's MVP in '62, and we won the league championship."

However, the Texans moved the next year to Kansas City. Football-mad Dallas residents weren't supporting either the Texans or the expansion Cowboys. The move was the Lone Star State's loss. Dawson would go on to lead the Chiefs to two AFL championship games and two Super Bowls during his tenure in K.C. The Chiefs were whipped by the Packers in Super Bowl I in '67, but came back to reaffirm an earlier version of interleague "parity" by stopping the Vikings, 23-7, in Super Bowl IV in 1970.

Through his retirement in 1975, Dawson managed to carve out a phenomenal career after his slow start. Overall, he completed 2,136 passes in 3,741 attempts for 28,711 yards. Aiming at such gifted receivers as Otis Taylor, he had 239 TD passes.

And he racked up most of those impressive stats while employed full-time as a sportscaster. He broke into the business just at the time when stations all over the country expanded their late-night newscasts to a half hour.

"In 1966, all of the Kansas City stations had 15-minute newscasts at 10, p.m. and very little sports," he explained. "The 'Tonight Show' would come on at 10:15 p.m. on the NBC station, and the other stations would start their late movies at the same time to compete.

"But then KMBC expanded to 30 minutes, and they needed a sportscaster," he added. "The Chiefs recommended me as a guy who knew how to talk already. I went on to handle the 6 and 10 p.m. sportscasts for nine years, even during the football season. During the fall, I'd still be on live at 6, and, even if I wasn't on live at 10, I'd appear on tape or film doing an interview or something." He also handled four radio shows a day on sister station KMBZ.

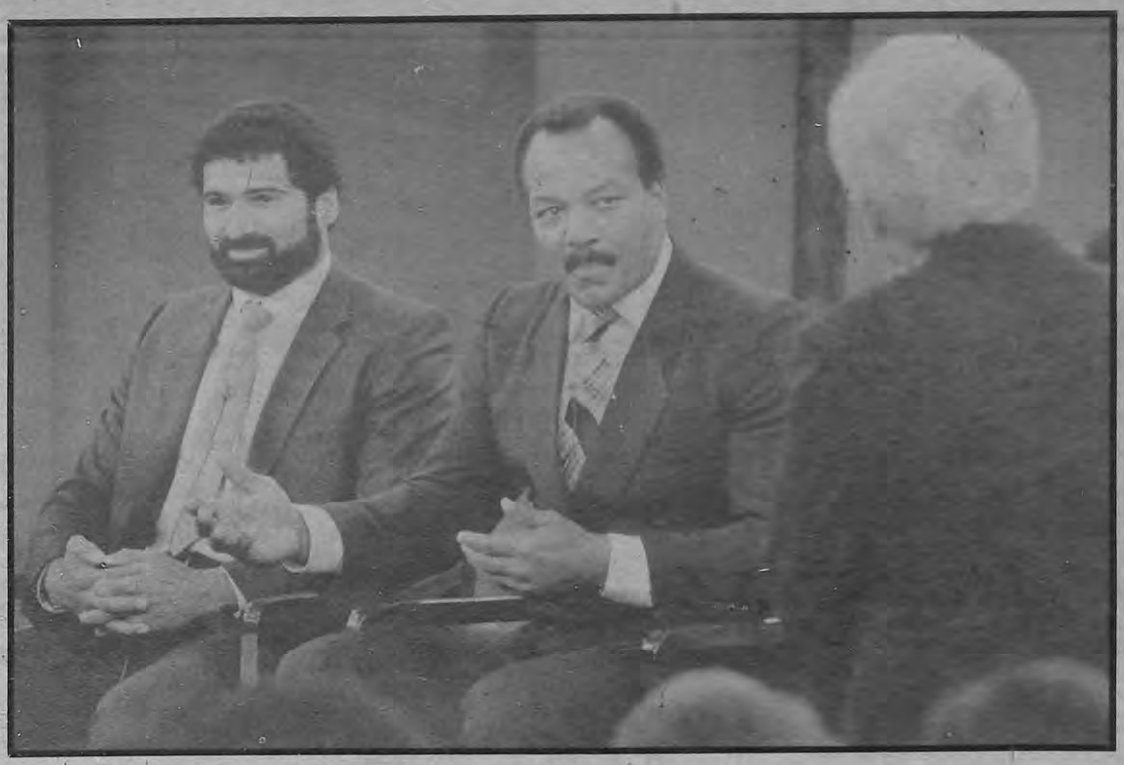
His experience on the air led him to the NBC job. Between 1979 and 1982, he teamed with play-by-play man Charlie Jones. But, after signing a three-year contract in May 1983, NBC suddenly did a complete reversal and refused to pick it up.

"The network had an option not to pick it up," Dawson said. "I think the accounting department prompted the change. The word came back that I had priced myself out of the game. A lot of the ex-athletes sign color analyst contracts for bargain-basement rates. I asked if the change was made on account of my talent, but I couldn't get an answer."

Dawson won't starve, though. The HBO football show keeps him on the road during the football season. In Kansas City, he's involved in the Truman National Life Insurance Co. And he has launched a company that has a colorful tinge to it.

"We're selling original oil paintings," he said. "Our goal is to have an original oil painting in every American home. We plan to branch out over the entire U.S. If everything goes well, this business should be very successful."

Sounds like a man who speaks from experience. A slow start or setback apparently won't deter Len Dawson. He's been down that road before, and he's none the worse for the wear.



Steeler fullback Franco Harris and Jim Brown discussed their views on football, Brown's rushing record and several other topics during the Feb. 6 Phil Donahue Show in Chicago.

Franco Meets Brown, Face-To-Face

Hall of Fame running back Jim Brown refused to back down from his claim that he could beat Franco Harris in a 40-yard dash when the two appeared along with Chicago Bear star Walter Payton on the nationally-televised Phil Donahue show Feb. 6 in Chicago.

Brown, 48, said he would seek a tryout with the Los Angeles Raiders if he was able to beat Harris, who indicated he was willing to accept the challenge from the man whose all-time NFL rushing record he figures to break this fall. In the two months since the show aired, however, nothing more has come of the challenge.

"I believe right now I could beat you in the 40," Brown told Harris during the show. Later, the former Cleveland great said, "If Franco wins, I'll apologize and forget the whole thing."

"There are probably 17, 18-year-old kids who could beat me," Harris replied, "but Jim Brown can't."

The hour-long show was filled with statements by Brown criticizing pro football the way it's played today. He also indirectly accused both Harris and Payton of being businessmen first and athletes second.

"They (football players of today) do so many things that remind me of my movie days," said Brown, who left football after nine seasons in the NFL for a career in films. "Sport to me is sport, it's not about money. It's about performance."

Brown was particularly critical of Harris' performance, especially the Steeler's habit of running out of bounds to avoid needless hits to help prolong his career. Months earlier, Brown had accused Harris of "hanging around" the league to break his all-time rushing mark.

"The only reason to run out of bounds is to stop the clock, period," Brown said. "There is no next game, as far as I'm concerned. You played this game to the fullest and let the chips fall where they may. Now if you're a businessman, you learn how to run out of bounds to preserve yourself."

Harris defended himself, saying a running back is most susceptible to injury when he tries to turn the corner near the sideline, adding that most of the hits taken in that situation are unnecessary.

"Most of the time if you're running to the sidelines, you're running sideways which is the worst possible way to run," said Harris. "I've taken my hits as tough as anyone, but when you run, you just don't use your athletic ability, you use your head. If you're near the sideline, why take that hit?

"There's no way you can coast on a football field, and if you think that, you're out of touch," said Harris. "When I look back over the career of Franco Harris, I can be very proud of my team and my contributions."

"He's honest," Brown said. "He's smarter than Walter and I." Earlier, Brown had praised Payton's running style, saying the Bear star appeared to share his philosophy of running. "Walter is a rare individual," Brown said. "His intensity level can't be matched. Mr. Harris is a different kind of performer. In his own way, he's contributed to a team that's won four championships."

Also during the show, Brown questioned the value of statistics used to establish the greatness of today's runners, saying any running back who is the premier back on a team and fails to gain 1,000 yards over the current 16-game schedule is "a cripple."

"Is 1,000 yards in 16 games representative of a good season?" asked Brown, who compiled much of his 12,312 career yards during 12-game seasons. "It's a standard that shouldn't even be talked about. You can walk to 1,000 yards in 16 games. The only reason I didn't get 1,000 yards is if I was hurt or didn't get the ball."

Both Payton and Harris gave their side of the story, defending themselves and the game as it's played today.

"You can't compare two people from two different time periods," Payton said. "We play the game in our time period according to the rules of today. We can't do anything about the fact we play 16 games. Jim Brown was the greatest in his time, there's no doubt about that."

"I think 16 games is a lot to get 1,000 yards," Harris conceded. "It doesn't mean the same as it did when the schedule was 14 or 12 games, but the thing Jim has to realize is that defenses have got a lot tougher."

"Was there anyone tougher in the world than Dick Butkus?" Brown asked.

"He was just one linebacker," Payton said. "Today, you've got teams with three or four linebackers who are faster than some running backs."

"The public is basically being misled of what true performance is," Brown replied. "My nine years would be tough for either of them (Harris and Payton) to top because the intensity level would be tough to top, that's my point. I'm talking about quality of performance."

Both Brown and Harris welcomed the opportunity to sit down face-to-face and discuss the earlier comments made by Brown.

"When the comments first were made, at that time I had more important things to think about," Harris said. "Reading the newspapers you don't get the true story, so I didn't want to comment without talking to Jim. I'm glad we got this chance to discuss things."

"I have a tremendous amount of respect for both these gentlemen, Brown said, "and one thing I wanted to do today was sit down face-to-face and show them what tremendous respect I had."

Both Harris and Payton will undoubtedly pass Brown's record during the course of the 1984 season, but who will do it first is the question. Harris, who's 34, needs just 362 yards (11,950) but could find himself battling for a starting job at training camp. Payton, on the other hand, will be just 30-years-old in September and needs 687 yards (11,625) to pass Brown.

While Harris could reach No. 1 first, there's little doubt that Payton will be king of the hill by season's end and should continue to pad his record for at least two or three more years.

NFL CONFIDENTIAL

Quarterbacks are the story in the National Football League this offseason.

Two quarterbacks who started against each other in the 1982 AFC title game -- Richard Todd and David Woodley -- have both been traded. They don't keep records on such things, but it's doubtful if two quarterbacks have met in a championship game and then both changed uniforms two years later.

It's a chance for a new start for both quarterbacks -- Todd never fit the scene in New York, and Woodley wants a second chance after losing out to Dan Marino in Miami -- and they'll get a lot of attention in training camp this year.

But they won't be the two quarterbacks at the top of the list when it comes to stirring up interest this fall. Danny White of Dallas has that niche all to himself.

It's unlikely any player in the league will face the pressure he's under this training camp.

Training camp is still almost four months away, and coach Tom Landry is already being peppered with questions about what would happen if White loses his job to Gary Hogeboom.

Would White sit gracefully on the bench, or would Landry be forced to trade him?

"It's always a tough situation when you have a starter who backs up," Landry said. "I don't care whether it's a quarterback or not. When he moves down, it's a great blow to him, and you can't say enough about that. A player wants to be a starter and when he's not, wow, it's hard to go down."

So would Landry have to trade White if he loses the job?

"That I can't say," Landry said. "I've handled quarterbacks a long time, and it's a feel you have. It could be difficult for White, but Jim Plunkett went to a backup position and then took the Raiders to the Super Bowl.

"I don't think Danny would accept it (a demotion), but the quality he has, it would be surprising if he couldn't handle the situation in the best interests of everyone concerned.

"He's that kind of person, and those kind of guys are rare; they just don't make a big stink about too much that will hurt a football team. It's always a tough decision because you're making decisions on people you think a lot of. I think a lot of Hogey and Danny, although it's not a decision you can't see. I know when it's time to do something. Those decisions are tough, but they have to be made if it's right," Landry said.

Those words make it sound as if Landry is ready to go with Hogeboom after the Cowboys lost their last three games and were knocked out of the playoffs in the wildcard game by the Rams.

But Landry says his mind is wide open.

"Even though Hogey had a good summer last year, he wasn't better than Danny in what he could do at the time training camp ended," he said. "I think things could be different this year. I was ready to make changes at any position if I had seen something clear-cut."

Landry must decide between White (left) and Hogeboom.

Landry then made a telling comment. "You have to look overall at the quarterback. You can't just say he's not throwing well. It's his leadership, what he's doing with the team and how they are responding to him. He may be doing super and nobody is responding to him. That is a possibility. It's unfortunate when that happens to a quarterback."

Of course, it's been said the Cowboys simply aren't responding to White even if the team's fall isn't his fault. Those words could indicate Landry feels he has to give Hogeboom a shot.

Stay tuned. This is a story that is going to be at the top of the list in the NFL this year. They're already cutting down trees to provide the newsprint for all the stories about the White-Hogeboom battle in camp this year. It'll be one of the tougher decisions Landry has had to make in his long career as the Cowboy coach.

* * *

As the escalating salary war continues between the NFL and the USFL, one player who has to be second-guessing himself is Todd Blackledge, the quarterback from Penn State who was drafted on the first round by the Kansas City Chiefs last year.

Blackledge had a year of eligibility left at Penn State but, since he had received his degree, he had the option of playing one more year at Penn State or turning pro last year.

He decided to turn pro and got a nice contract, by 1983 standards, for slightly over $2 million.

But the standards have changed -- especially in view of the contract Steve Young got from the Los Angeles Express.

If Blackledge had waited a year, he might have been the quarterback who got the Young offer since he's supposed to be a better prospect.

They say that life is all a matter of timing. In this case, Blackledge's timing was just one year too early.

* * *

Bart Starr is the coach of a football team that doesn't exist.

Starr is the director of football operations for something called the Phoenix Firebirds, a group of businessmen in Phoenix attempting to land an expansion franchise in the NFL.

To help their cause with the NFL owners, they've hired Starr to help sell their message, and he is supposed to be building a house in Phoenix.

The problem is that there's no guarantee the Firebirds -- who claim to have invested $800,000 in their attempt to get a team -- will be awarded an expansion franchise even if the city of Phoenix eventually gets a team.

Even if Phoenix does get a team, Starr is hardly considered the perfect man to make a new franchise a success. He struggled in Green Bay before finally being fired at the end of last season.

* * *

Ernie Accorsi, the former general manager of the Baltimore Colts, made what turned out to be a well-timed move when he quit the team on Feb. 7. He was so tired of the meddling by owner Robert Irsay and general counsel Michael Chernoff that he quit without the guarantee of another job. By quitting early in February, he managed to avoid being associated with Irsay's trips around the country in the last month as he auctioned off his club to the highest bidder, finally landing in Indianapolis.

Accorsi also landed a better job and got a raise when he was named assistant to the president of the Cleveland Browns in charge of negotiating contracts.

With the Colts, he was making only $60,000 and had the lowest salary in the league for a general manager.

* * *

Al Davis, the rebel Raider owner, continued his sniping at commissioner Pete Rozelle at the recent one-day owners' meeting in Chicago.

When a committee of Jet owner Leon Hess, Buc owner Hugh Culverhouse and Charger owner Gene Klein presented a report on the new contract they had negotiated with Rozelle, Davis objected. He said the committee was formed during one of the times the Raiders were sent out of the room while their court case was being discussed.

The NFL then produced the minutes to show that the Raiders had been present. The vote on forming the committee was 27-1 with Davis' assistant Al LoCasale casting the lone negative vote.

Some owners had complained about not being informed about Rozelle's contract, so the committee gave them a report. All the general managers were sent out of the room when the sensitive issue was discussed with only the owners present.

* * *

You always hear about Herschel Walker leaving school to play in the USFL. But you don't hear much about Milt Carthens.

Carthens was a University of Michigan tight end who was redshirted in 1981 and decided to sign with the Michigan Panthers this year and pass up his final season of eligibility.

"They seemed pretty nice," Carthens said. He was given a $6,000 signing bonus and a $42,000 salary if he made the team.

He went to training camp and was cut. "If I knew what I know now, I guess I would have held out a little longer, probably gone back to school," he said. "I didn't want to end up a statistic."

He's now forfeited his final year of college eligibility, and he still has 30 credits to go to get his degree, although he says he plans to go back this fall. The Panthers are supposed to give him money to finish college.

* * *

The power of television was never demonstrated better than when ABC changed the date of the New Jersey-Jacksonville game on short notice from a Friday night to a Sunday afternoon.

The game had been scheduled to be televised by ESPN, and the executives from the cable network were furious.

But ABC calls the shots.

Meanwhile, the NFL is unhappy

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AFC Central Wrap-up

Bengals Deal Top Pick

CINCINNATI: As their first-pick possibilities continued to dwindle, the Bengals, who seemingly waited too long to enter the Steve Young sweepstakes, finally answered the question of who they'd pick No. 1 by not picking anyone at all. In a move that was hardly surprising, only because the possibility had been rumored for some time, the Bengals dealt the first pick in the draft to the New England Patriots. In return, the Bengals got two first-rounders from the Patriots, the 16th and 28th picks, along with a tenth-round pick this year and a fifth-round pick in next year's draft. It was long rumored that the Bengals were working on a deal to rid themselves of the top pick, the concensus being that the team would not care to spend the kind of money it would take to secure the services of that player. Head coach Sam Wyche discounted that motive, however. "We saw a chance to have four of the top 35 picks instead of three, and we went for it," he said. The Bengals will now own the seventh, 16th, 28th and 35th picks. New England general manager Pat Sullivan admitted that the two teams had been working on a trade for "several weeks" but that, at times, the proposed deal seemed dead. The key for the Bengals seemed to come when the team saw Steve Young, its No. 1 choice, sign with the USFL . . . Young, according to his agent, Leigh Steinberg, hadn't received a concrete offer from the Bengals until just four days before the BYU quarterback inked his record contract with the L.A. Express. Although the Bengals had refused to confirm reports of their offer to Young, Steinberg admitted that the Cincinnati package was for $3.5 million over five years. The offer included a $1 million signing bonus and a salary of $500,000 a year for five years. Steinberg claimed that the Bengals waited until the last minute before deciding that Young would be their man, and complained, "What more did they (the Bengals) need to know about Steve? They'd seen him play several times, they'd been to Provo; Sam Wyche has seen him play and had talked to him. I mean, he's a Mormon; he doesn't smoke or drink. What more did they need to know?" In light of the differences in the contract offers, however, it's doubtful, despite what Steinberg says, that the Bengals were really a viable alternative. "I can't tell you that we were ever close to signing him," said Mike Brown, the Bengals' assistant general manager. "We were probably being used to push up the offer from the other league. Steinberg never discussed what the other side was offering and I never asked. I'm reluctant to say what we offered. It was big, but it wasn't big enough." Brown continued, "What they're buying is not so much a football player so much as a foothold in a market through the public relations that stems from signing the player. When you get down to it, what will make it for them is whether or not they win." But, while Young's enormous contract was in a world of its own, Brown opined that the contracts signed by two other

Duriel Harris

highly-sought prospects, Mike Rozier and Reggie White, were not. "In my opinion, if Rozier and White had waited, they would have been offered NFL contracts for just as much as they got from the USFL. The problem we have is that the USFL teams are bidding with no competition." Brown, before the trade, insisted his team would still get two quality players from the draft, with the first and seventh picks in the first round. "We haven't lost our No. 1 pick, we just lost a player who could have been that No. 1," he said. "We're still in good shape. A number of players who are comparable to Young are still in the pool." . . . With Young gone, the Bengals had admitted that they were now trying to narrow the focus on about "a half-dozen players" who they considered as possible first picks. Brown, who wouldn't admit that the Bengals had been looking principally for a quarterback, did say, "Esiason is a good prospect. The kid from Duke (Ben Bennett) is another one. Jeff Hostetler, the West Virginia quarterback, comes to mind, too. I don't think it's a year where one player is head and shoulders above all the others. We will come out of this with a good player, and only time will tell if he's better than Steve Young." . . . Meanwhile, Bengal rookie coach Sam Wyche was busy criticizing the Young package. "How can any one player repay that kind of money? How can you keep the rest of your team happy when you're paying one guy that kind of money?" he queried. "That kind of money has cheapened the whole game. It has not cheapened the NFL, but rather the idea of the whole game. How do you put a worth on talent now? How are you going to measure it?" . . . Wyche downplayed the notion that the Bengals would have selected Esiason, had they retained the first pick. "We are not going to take a quarterback early," he announced recently. He also indicated that the Bengals weren't interested in a running back. "There are no super backs in this year's draft," he assessed. "There are six-to-12 guys who have the qualities we're looking for to one degree or another, and some of those people will be available after we make our first two selections." Although it had been widely believed that the Bengals would have liked to come out of the draft with help at wide receiver and linebacker, Wyche noted that he thought the backup players already on the squad could step in at positions that became open when the Bengal incumbents jumped to the USFL. "The only thing certain about what we do is that when we do it, some people are going to say we made a mistake," Wyche concluded on the draft, prior to the trade. "That's because that great, can't-miss player that everybody wants just isn't out there this year." . . . The general feeling is that the Bengals would have taken the best athlete with the first pick and then tried to fill a specific need with the seventh pick overall. There had been rumors that the Bengals were strongly considering Nebraska guard Dean Steinkuhler for several reasons. Steinkuhler is a former teammate of center Dave Rimington, last year's top Bengal pick, and there's an opening in the offensive line at Dave Lapham's vacated left guard position. Also, there was some feeling that Steinkuhler, because he's an offensive lineman, would have come cheaper than a skill-position player. The Bengals probably won't get Steinkuhler now with the seventh pick . . . The Bengals reached agreement with veteran defensive lineman Gary Burley on a new contract, but 34-year-old wide receiver Isaac Curtis was still unsigned. Bryan Hicks, the team's only other unsigned free agent, was still looking at some USFL teams. It's questionable that Hicks, a former starter at free safety, has a future in Cincinnati. After recovering early during the past season from a groin injury, Hicks was never reactivated, spending the entire season on injured reserve . . . Mike Brown argued that Bengal ticket sales would suffer from the Colts' move to Indianapolis. "It'll definitely cut into our season ticket sales," Brown claimed. "Certainly, the people in the Indianapolis area will go to the Colts' games, and we've got fans up there as well as elsewhere in Indiana." Brown, however, denied that he and his father had moved to block the Colts' franchise transfer. "There isn't anything we can do legally to stop the Colts from moving to Indianapolis. Our best marketing device or procedure is to merely field as good a team as we can and hold onto our following in Ohio and Kentucky," he said . . . Quarterback Ken Anderson was fined $1,000 by the Kentucky Alcoholic Beverage Control Board. The board charged that Anderson, who owns a beer distributorship in Erlanger, Kentucky, gave beer away to taverns and also installed tap lines in bars without keeping accurate records.

CLEVELAND: It's been an offseason of acquisitions for the Browns, who added two veterans at positions that needed shoring up and gained an experienced front office official who'll take some of the workload from the desk of owner Art Modell. The Browns' first player move was the acquisition of defensive end Carl Hairston from the Philadelphia Eagles. Hairston, who was named All-NFC in 1980 and 1981, gives the Browns a pass-rushing defensive end, one of the team's crying needs for the past several seasons. "Hairston can be a pass-rushing specialist in a number of our defensive alignments," said coach Sam Rutigliano. "We also wanted him because he has been known as a dominant team leader, and he can help our developing defense, especially on the line, where we have three starters (Bob Golic, Reggie Camp and Keith Baldwin) who are young and have been together for just one year." Hairston, who enjoyed an eight-year career with the Eagles, admitted that the deal caught him by surprise. "It shocked me," he said. "It caught me off guard, and, for at least an hour, I was walking through the house with my mind blank." When the cobwebs cleared, Hairston conceded that he was happy to be joining the Browns. The 6-3, 260-pounder was Philadelphia's seventh-round draft choice in 1976 after being a four-year starter at Maryland-Eastern Shore. He had served as the Eagles' defensive captain for the past five seasons. "Leadership is all it takes sometimes to bring out that nasty, tenacious play," Hairston said of his possible role with the young Cleveland defense. "I'm excited about coming to Cleveland, and I'm looking forward to playing with the Browns and blending right in with them. I look forward to establishing myself again as a great player. I know I can still play. I don't want people to say I was traded because I can't play anymore, because I know I can. I kind of look at it as though people think I'm washed up, but I'm not washed up. I know Carl Hairston isn't washed up, and that's going to be my inspiration." In his final season with the Eagles, Hairston recorded five sacks, 56 tackles and two fumble recoveries. The Browns surrendered an undisclosed 1985 draft choice for Hairston. Said Rutigliano, "Getting Hairston takes away the urgency of us having to draft a defensive end. There's not that pressure now. Most of the higher-rated pass-rushers were gone, and this will let us look in another direction where we need help." . . . The Browns, however, also helped themselves in their other area of biggest need, acquiring Miami Dolphin wide receiver Duriel Harris for a fifth-round draft pick in '85. That pick could go as high as a No. 2, though, depending upon how much Harris plays for Cleveland. The Dolphins had been trying to unload Harris for two seasons, and they found a willing taker in the Browns, who desperately need some outside speed at the wideout slots. Said Harris of the deal, which he welcomed: "Coach Shula has been successful with his track record, so I didn't expect him to change his philosophies for Duriel Harris, but I don't think his way was the most effective way for us to have a good relationship. The motivational tactics he used with me and grilling me, and things like that, were just out of line. You can talk to people in a certain way and they respect you just as much. It was an uncomfortable situation, and when you get to the point where you and

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Confidential

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with ABC because it is helping to keep the USFL alive. The *Washington Post* recently claimed that the NFL is putting subtle pressure on the network, behind the scenes, in an attempt to get the network to pull out.

NFL officials, worried about an antitrust suit by the USFL, denied the report in the strongest possible terms, but don't invite Pete Rozelle and Roone Arledge to the same party.

* * *

You can kind of file this under the "Some Dreams Die Hard" Department, but former track stars Renaldo "Skeets" Nehemiah and Willie Gault are still pursuing their goals to participate in this summer's Olympics in Los Angeles.

Nehemiah, who's yet to become the receiver that 49er coach Bill Walsh keeps insisting he can be, is awaiting yet another hearing in his case. And Gault, who enjoyed success in his rookie campaign last season, but who might never become known as the most technical of pass-route practitioners, is also planning further legal action to have his amateur track status restored.

Under NCAA rules, both men are still amateurs, but under IOC rules, they're not permitted to run in meets where they participate against foreign athletes, which, anymore, is just about any meet.

Gault and his attorney, California-based Everett Glenn, claim to have uncovered "some secret information that they think will give him a good shot at being declared an amateur in track."

Meanwhile, Chicago Bear head coach Mike Ditka, coming up on the final year of his contract, isn't all that thrilled about having his top receiving threat running hurdles in August instead of pass routes in July.

"He needs to make the same kind of commitment to football that he's made in track," said Ditka.

* * *

You're probably not about to see any members of the Philadelphia Eagles volunteering to serve as the team's captains in July when the Eagles report for training camp.

The reasons? Well, all three of the Eagle captains from last year's squad are no longer with the team. Reserve safety John Sciarra (special teams), center Guy Morriss (offense) and defensive end Carl Hairston (defense) were all sent packing by the rebuilding Eagles, who like to claim they're beginning a "youth movement."

Critics of Philly owner Leonard Tose, however, claim the unloadings are more a "money movement." It's no secret, they point out, that Tose has been behind the eight ball financially, and unloading high-priced veterans is certainly one way to lower the payroll.

Dan Pastorini, Mark Slater, Tony Franklin and Frank LeMaster are other Eagle veterans who won't be back in '84.

As for team captains, maybe the Eagles will be forced to draw straws.

* * *

Anonymous NFL owner on why someone would want to purchase an NFL franchise for upwards of $70 million, especially during these hectic times in pro football: "Look at it this way; if you have $60 million to spend and you put it into tax-free municipal bonds at 12 percent, you net $7.2 million a year. You're not going to get that from an NFL franchise, but you're going to get a lot more satisfaction than you're going to get clipping coupons.

AFC Central

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the boss don't feel comfortable, it's time to move on. The last two years for me have been more like a chore. There were many things I just couldn't digest. Coach Rutigliano couldn't promise me sunshine, but he could promise me plenty of footballs. Ozzie Newsome caught 89 passes last season; that's like two seasons in Miami. If we (Cleveland and Miami) ever hook up on Sunday, I won't have any mercy. I won't hold any hostages." Shula retorted: "As I've said many times, Duriel is a guy who has extreme highs and lows. During those lows, he's very difficult to deal with. Maybe Rutigliano can deal with him better." The Browns can certainly use him, and they've made no secret of their delight in landing the onetime Dolphins' standout... Final Cleveland "acquisition" was the addition of former Baltimore Colt general manager Ernie Accorsi as an assistant to the president. A 13-year veteran of the NFL, Accorsi will be involved in all phases of Browns' activities, especially in the signing of players and liaison with the league office. "Getting Ernie is a real bonus for us," enthused Rutigliano. "He has been a successful negotiator, and he has earned a reputation as one of the top administrators in professional sports. We're excited to have him join us. We know he had a number of opportunities in the NFL and other sports-related businesses, and we're pleased we could attract him here." Said Accorsi, who, a month earlier, had resigned his position with the Colts: "The key factor in my decision was to work with Art Modell and the Browns' organization." Accorsi had job offers from the Buffalo Bills, New York Giants, the NFL office, a major university as athletic director and a Baltimore newspaper as sports editor . . . The Browns announced the signings of three free agents: offensive lineman Robin Ham, wide receiver Wade Manning and running back Mike Harmon . . . The intense Cleveland-Pittsburgh rivalry will be part of the exhibition schedule this year, too. The Browns will host the Steelers in the preseason opener on August 4 . . . The Browns announced an average ticket increase of $2.85 . . . Jim Bailey, Cleveland's vice president and general counsel, was named the team's executive vice president by owner Art Modell . . . There was some speculation that the Browns might be willing to deal veteran wide receiver Dave Logan, although they expect they couldn't get much more than a middle-round draft pick in return . . . Debate continued over whether or not a new, domed stadium should be built in downtown Cleveland . . . With the acquisitions of Carl Hairston and Duriel Harris, the Browns could well concentrate on defensive backfield with their early-round draft picks . . . Sam Rutigliano noted that if a quality quarterback were available, he might select him, and also noted that Browns could well try to trade up in the first round . . . One player the Browns are desperately trying to trade the rights to is receiver Ron Brown, the team's top pick in last year's draft. Brown, of course, snubbed the Browns for a shot at the Olympics. If he isn't signed by the draft, he goes back into the player pool and can be drafted again.

HOUSTON: Biggest news of the past few months for the Oilers, of course, was the signing of CFL quarterback Warren Moon. The 27-year-old signal-caller got a five-year, $6 million deal from the Oilers who outbid the Seattle Seahawks for his services. The major share of Moon's pact with Houston will be guaranteed. Moon admitted that "the security of the contract," which is said to be loaded with up-front bonuses, was the major difference between the two NFL offers. The signing ended a series of marathon meetings between Houston general manager Ladd Herzeg and Moon's agent, Leigh Steinberg. "Basically, it was the hardest decision Warren's ever had to make," said Steinberg. "It was an incredibly tough decision. But, in some ways, it was the Houston fans that sold him on Houston. We got letters from Houston fans saying, 'Please, please sign with the Oilers.' You can't beat that." Moon's decision was also influenced by the presence of Hugh Campbell, his former coach at Edmonton, as the new Oiler head coach. Campbell and Moon combined to win five Grey Cup championships with the Eskimos. "It'll take him awhile to adjust," admittd Campbell. "I don't expect him to walk in right away and set the league afire, but I have no reasons to believe he won't be successful. He comes in with me thinking he'll become our No. 1 quarterback, but he knows me well enough that he understands he'll have to earn the job. The best man, whoever he is, will start. Whatever pressure there is on Warren will make him better. I know how well he handles pressure. He has the ability to push things aside that might be distracting to some people. The money won't have any effect on him. If everybody played for free, Warren would play for free. The feedback I get from the other quarterbacks (Gifford Nielsen, Oliver Luck and Brian Ransom) has been very positive. They welcome the competition. By getting Warren, this allows me to move on to other things. There are a lot of other things that still need to be done." Said the 6-3, 210-pound Moon: "As an athlete, I'm very goal-oriented, and I'm always looking for challenges. Coming here gives me a tremendous challenge. I want to win the Super Bowl and have that ring, and I honestly believe the Oilers have the tools to do just that. I've been a winner all my life, and I see no reason to quit now. I was the highest-paid player in Canada and I still went out there and played with the same reckless abandon that I hope I can play with this year. My running puts extra pressure on the defense, and that is something they must be leery of. I use good judgement when I run, however, and know how to get down and get out of bounds." Moon said he sees no problems in adjusting to the NFL's tighter defenses. "It all boils down to completing passes, and, if I'm hitting a guy in the chest, it doesn't matter who is covering him, he should catch the ball," he said. "Maybe there will be tighter coverages, but, if I'm putting the ball in the right place, I really don't see any problems." In six CFL seasons, Moon completed 1,369 passes in 2,382 attempts for 26,228 yards and 144 touchdowns . . . Moon will wear uniform No. 1 in Houston. "This means the Oilers will be No. 1 again," said owner Bud Adams, who claimed that he never discussed the money terms with Herzeg during the delicate negotiations . . . More Hugh Campbell: "One of Warren's great gifts is that he is able to take advantage of the weapons at his disposal. He'll bring out the best in the other players once he gets used to them and they get used to him." . . . The Oilers looked like they could be stuck with unhappy running back Earl Campbell. Sources indicate that the Oilers, while dangling Campbell to the rest of the league, are intent on getting proven players in return, rather than draft picks. The Oilers already own several extra picks in the draft's early rounds, and they're said to be after a left offensive tackle and a pass-rushing defensive lineman. They'd settle for the tackle plus a running back. Although the Oilers deny it, they attempted to peddle Campbell to the New England Patriots. Asking price? Tackle Brian Holloway and running back Tony Collins. The Patriots countered with Bob Cryder and Robert Weathers, and the Oilers contended that wasn't enough. Another team supposedly interested in Campbell is the Miami Dolphins, who might be willing to part with Doug Betters, one of the league's top sack specialists in 1983, as part of the deal. Earlier, the Redskins nixed an Oiler proposal when Herzeg requested Joe Jacoby as part of the package for Campbell. Apparently, for now, Campbell has dropped his threat to challenge the NFL's exclusivity clause in the standard player contract. Campbell had said he might contest the clause so that he could play in both professional leagues. One thing is certain: the Oilers will not renegotiate Campbell's contract, and, now that Warren Moon's terms have pretty much been revealed, it's doubtful Campbell will be very happy about making one-third what Moon will pull in. Herzeg has emphatically stated that the Oilers will not grant Campbell another contract. "At the time of the original renegotiation, we anticipated a possible subsequent attempt to renegotiate in the future and we tried at that time to eliminate that possibility. To make certain everyone was satisfied, we put in, at our request, a non-renegotiation clause that carries with it a very heavy penalty," explained Herzeg. "Our stance is probably a lot stronger in this instance than it would be in another instance, because we do have the non-renegotiation clause in his contract. I also don't believe anyone, except maybe Earl, would say he is undercompensated when compared with the other top backs in the league." Campbell's 1983 salary was reported to be $450,000, which included a $100,000 bonus . . . The Oilers recently re-signed free agent wide receiver Tim Smith, the club's top pass receiver in 1983, to a new, multi-year pact. As per club policy, terms of the pact were not released. "The Oilers are extremely pleased to have Tim signed for the future. He knows how to go and get the ball," said Herzeg . . . The Oilers dearly covet Nebraska wide receiver Irving Fryar in the draft, and, if he is not available, could well trade down . . . The club is still seeking some help on the defensive line in trade talks beyond the Earl Campbell proposals . . . Hugh Campbell opined that the glut of quarterbacks won't be a problem. The Oilers will look to deal one of their holdover signal-callers, most likely Gifford Nielsen. "If you're asking me who is the odd-man-out," said Campbell, "I think that decision will come sooner – and with more ease – than who is going to be the starting quarterback. After watching two of them extensively on film, and hearing about the third one's arm (Ramson), I think they all have merit."

Sidelines

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enough they're drafting so far down the list, but there's not going to be anyone left that's worth a darn who can come in and really make a significant difference in 1984. A few months ago, I made up a list of players who I felt the Steelers had a real shot at getting, but my list is pretty useless now. None of the people on it will be around when the Steelers draft in the first round.

So, maybe it's time for some trades. Maybe the trade for David Woodley, which, while very necessary in my mind was still pretty much out of character for the Steelers, will actually be the first of many. At cornerback, for instance, I think the Steelers might be better served if they tried to land a veteran rather than count on the draft. My original list of draft prospects included corners like Leonard Coleman of Vanderbilt, Mossie Cade of Texas and Allanda Smith of TCU. But Smith has gone to the USFL, and the other two will be "pushed up" in the first round now because of the thin talent pool.

Maybe the Steelers should have tried to swing a deal for Terry Jackson of the New York Giants, as I think someone in your paper suggested a few months ago. Now I see that Jackson has been traded to the Seahawks. Even if the Seahawks gave up a third-round choice for him, he would have been a bargain for the Steelers at that price.

Probably everyone in the league realizes how bad a draft year it figures to be, and that could make trading even more difficult, but I think the Steelers should still give it a try.

It's nice to look back on the way things used to be, but, with the game changing the way it is, maybe it's time for the Steelers to change, too. For one year, maybe it's time to quit leaning on the draft as the only way of acquiring players.

Thank you,
Lawrence Bennett
Pittsburgh, PA

It looks like the Steelers are willing to try to make some moves, but it is, as you suggest, going to be a difficult market this year. Teams just don't want to part with the talent they've got, because they're not sure they can replace that talent through the draft. The Houston Oilers, for example, have had a terrible time trying to deal Earl Campbell. For one thing, the Oilers want players, not draft picks, in return. Secondly, no one's willing to surrender the type of players the Oilers want.

Teams used to hoard draft picks, but this year that might not prove as valuable as in the past. The Steelers, who looked like they might have a pretty significant roster turnover in '84, might not be able to afford to rid themselves of some veteran players who, under normal circumstances, might find themselves in trouble.

NO LIMBS THIS YEAR

Dear Sirs:

Every year it seems you're willing to go out on a limb and predict the Steelers' first-round draft pick. Well, it's that time again, so, how about it? What's your opinion?

An interested reader,
Becky Rautzaung
Medina, OH

The tree's been pruned too thin this year for us to even fathom an educated guess as to names. Outside of maybe linebacker and quarterback, we could see the Steelers picking any position in the first round, although we still feel offensive tackle and cornerback are the biggest needs. However, for a change, the team might really be able to justify their claim of taking the best athlete available. They may not have a choice.

LOVES WRITERS

Dear Sirs:

I want to compliment you on a fine, informative paper, but most of all on finding true "Pittsburgh people" to write the articles. They talk -- or write, I guess I should say -- a familiar from-the-heart language with blunt but humorous honesty that can't be found anywhere in this entire world like it is in my beloved hometown of Pittsburgh.

I hope you will continue your good work for a long time to come. Thanks for that special touch of home that I miss so desperately.

Sincerely,
Lt. Col. Lorena Purvis
APO San Francisco, CA

Thank you for your kind words. We know our writers will appreciate them.

Editor's Desk

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pre-accident strength.

"That," Gabe says, "was a very tangible goal, to get that arm healthy again. There are so many more things that I can do for myself now that the arm is a lot stronger."

Numbered among those things is the very simple task of changing his son Timothy's diaper. Timothy was, in a large sense, a catalyst for Gabe.

"I worked to get my arm skills better so that I can hold him and do things for him," he relates. "He helped me through a lot of depression.

"Now I feel like I can help him a lot, too. I want to be able to teach him things that I've learned, things that have come to mean a lot to me now. He is a very, very important part of my life, as is my wife."

Gabe, who leaves Harmarville to go home on weekends, will soon find that family life is a full-time job. It's a prospect he welcomes.

"I haven't thought a lot about what I want to do with my life," he admits. "Right now, I just want to get home. I want to adjust to a home life, to being in an environment outside the center.

"I think I've adjusted well to the life here at the center. I've made some good friends, developed some good relationships. There are people here who really spur you on to do more. You look at some of them and see how hard they're working and it makes you want to work harder, too. And, I hope maybe I've helped some of them, too. Hopefully, someone's looked at me and I've urged them to work harder.

"It works both ways."

There are, to be sure, still some low moments for Gabe Rivera. He contends that he can get through them now.

"The low spots come and go," he says. "I can't really remember when my lowest pooit was. Maybe it was when I was lying in the hospital bed and realized that I couldn't get up and move around anymore. But I try not to reflect too long on those times.

"I thought it would be a lot tougher watching the (Steeler) games on TV, but I handled it pretty well. The toughest times are when I watched them and thought about what I might be doing to help. I think I could have helped them out a lot."

He has not, he says, been offered a position by the Steelers, and admits that any talk of that is far too premature. There are, he points out, priorities.

"Right now, the Steelers have been more concerned with my rehabilitation than anything," Gabe says. "I would think any talk of a job would have to come from my side.

"But I've still got a lot of things to do. My arm will be 100 percent some day, and I'm working hard towards that. There are still some things I've got to master."

Gabe Rivera, however, is far more advanced than he's willing to give himself credit for.

In the game of life, he's mastered a lot more than most of us would be able to cope with.

"My retirement came a lot sooner than I expected," he says. "I used to think to myself that there wasn't much I was going to accomplish from my hospital bed, but I've learned now that I can do a lot of things, and, in time, I'll be able to do a lot more."

* * *

Perhaps John Meyer should spend the air fare to fly to Pittsburgh to visit Gabe Rivera.

On a personal basis, I knew Meyer far better than Rivera.

I'd first met him by phone when he was in Pittsburgh for the team's rookie orientation the weekend following his second-round selection in the 1982 draft. Because I had an appointment that afternoon, and couldn't wait at the stadium for him to return from nearby Divine Providence Hospital, where he was undergoing a series of tests developed by Jon Kolb, I asked Steeler PR director Joe Gordon if he'd have Meyer call me at home.

When Saturday evening rolled around with no word from Meyer, I figured the interview opportunity was lost. Until Sunday morning, that is, when an apologetic Meyer phoned.

I'd stood next to Meyer at St. Vincent's, his damaged knee heavily wrapped, and watched him run lap after lap around the sun-baked practice fields. And, when the Steelers made the playoffs under the strike-expanded Super Bowl tournament format, it was John Meyer that stood next to me in the Three Rivers Stadium pressbox, tipping me off as to the inside strategy of the game against the Chargers.

John Meyer

I'd talked to Meyer this past January, and he seemed confident that his rehabilitation was well on its way toward getting him into a Steeler uniform after two years of inactivity.

The Steeler prospectus, just recently delivered in the mail, even touted Meyer as a possible able body to shore up a questionable offensive line.

But, it's highly doubtful that John Meyer will ever be a Steeler.

When he was examined recently in Pittsburgh by team doctors, the verdict came thundering down like a sledge hammer upon him. More surgery to correct some stretching of the knee ligaments.

Unlike Gabe Rivera, John Meyer has had a tough time accepting his inevitable fate.

"Everything seemed to be going so well," he said last week, his voice as hollow now as someone whispering in a church at Lent. "I was getting anxious and happy and I couldn't wait to get to Pittsburgh, and then . . ."

Understandably, his voice trails off. This has not been, by his own admission, the best of times for John Meyer.

"I was doing some running and it (the knee) just didn't seem right," he relates. "They tell me now that I'm back to square one, back where I was. The doctors say the rehabilitation time could even be longer this time.

"There's not much I can do. I can't run, even. At least if I could run, it would help my mental outlook. But I can't run or lift weights with it."

How does a man deal with a year-and-a-half rehabilitation, only to discover that it was all for naught?

"I haven't dealt with it," Meyer admits.

Accepted it, perhaps?

"No, I haven't," he says quietly. "I mean, it makes you wonder. Some days, I wonder why it was me. It still hasn't sunken in, I guess.

"The Steeler doctors weren't too optimistic. They said I wouldn't be able to play again. I guess they can say that, but it's still just an opinion. I haven't given up all hope. I still plan on playing football . . . someday."

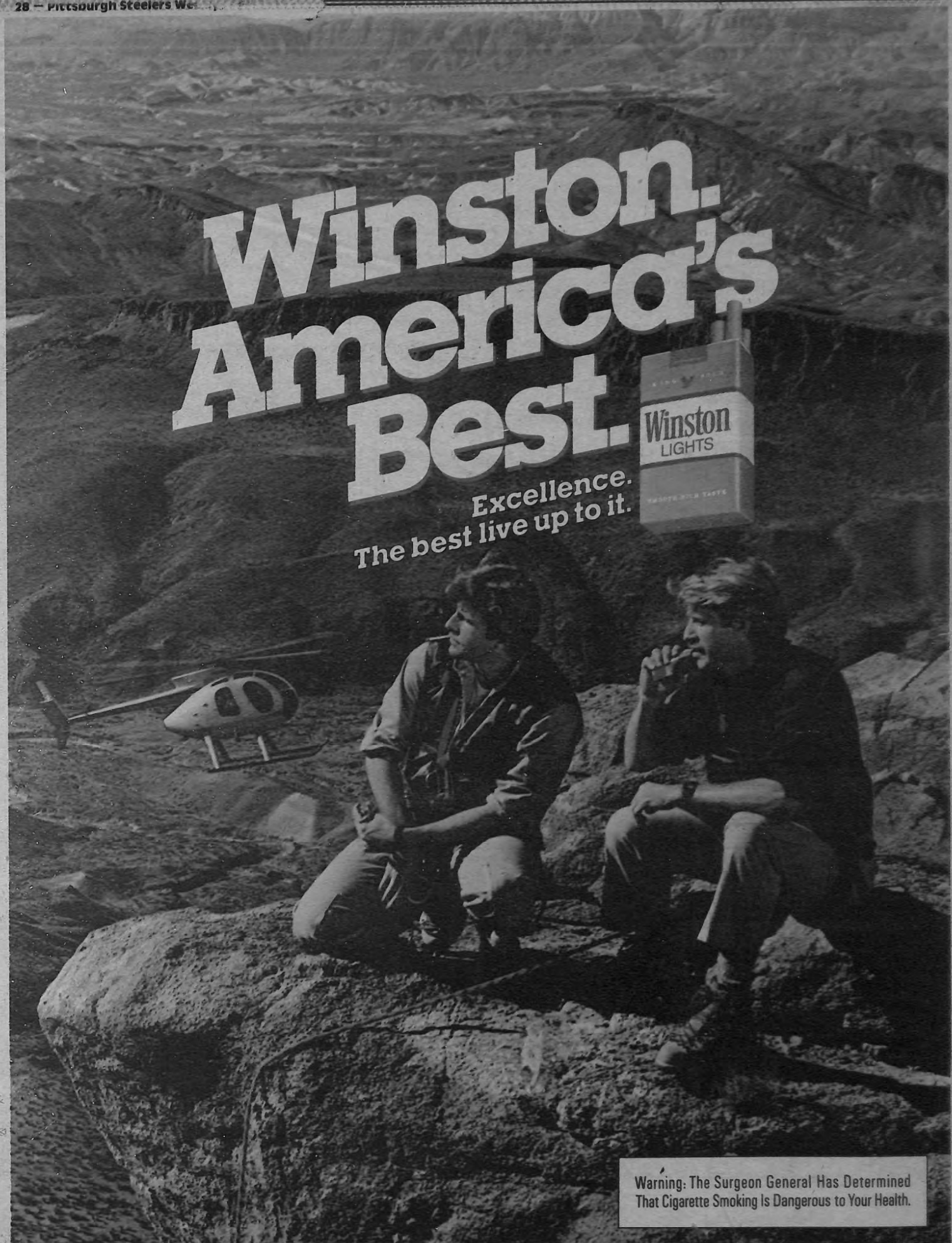
No computer is necessary to measure the odds against Meyer ever donning the black and gold of the Steelers. Sometimes, people don't come back from a one-year absence, let alone what could turn out to be a four-year hiatus from the game.

In his heart of hearts, John Meyer knows it's over.

"Some guys get at least one day in the sun," he laments. "I didn't get any at all."

Gabe Rivera didn't get many, either.

Because, for the Steelers, who might be well-advised to add a witch doctor to their medical staff, tragedy only comes in one size.



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11 mg. "tar", 0.7 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.